

# TOWARDS HIGER CONSCIOUSNESS ( Studies in Indian Philosophy of Life )

By

SATINDER NATH MAHAJAN  
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY



DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, KANPUR**

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## PREFACE

This work is an outcome of several years of teaching Indian Philosophy of Life to B. Tech. students at IIT/K, and its primary purpose is to serve as a source-cum-inspiration - book for students who may take that course in future. There has been an increasing sensitivity to the undesirable and evil aspects of contemporary Western civilization which unfortunately tends to dominate man's world globally. Many thinking people have been concerned about it and have turned to Eastern cultures and philosophies for alternative and saner ways of inhabiting a planet and an eco-system such as our earth. This book though not primarily written from this point of view may yet serve some function in gaining an understanding of such alternatives as by its very nature it presents some fragments from the very rich and complex Indian intellectual traditions. It should be of interest to an intelligent and worried layman. To Indian readers it should have an added appeal of re-viewing and re-thinking certain to-them-familiar concepts and problems in contemporary terms.

Freedom from a small, limited, anxious and fragmented life and quest for perfection runs throughout this work as its unifying theme. Yet it is obviously incomplete and made of parts of diverse nature. Its justification lies in that it may yet or even perhaps because of its character prove useful and stimulating to students for whom it is meant mainly. I do hope, nevertheless, to expand it soon in an attempt to make



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it a little less incomplete. Meanwhile the philosophically serious may find the papers presented at the end of the book, especially the last one 'Sākṣin and the Problem of Jīvanmukti' worth some good cogitations.

Thanks are due: first of all to the Q.I.P., IIT/K for financial assistance for the preparation of this manuscript; to Mr. V.N. Katiyar for neat and efficient typing and to Shri Sudama Prasad for cyclostyling. I am also grateful to D.C. Srivastava and E.P. Patra our worthy graduate students for management; to my colleagues especially Dr. S.A. Shaida and T.K.A. Neesar for sustained, immensely valuable moral and psychological support during my illness which assumed lengthy and sometimes threatening proportions.

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SATINDER NATH MAHAJAN  
I.I.T. KANPUR

## CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
SECTION I		
I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	DESIRE LIFE AND BEYOND	22
III	KARMA YOGA	43
IV	RĀJA YOGA	88
V	JNĀNA YOGA	184
SECTION II		
VI	INDIA AND HER ROLE IN THE WORLD	218
VII	MORAL AND AESTHETIC VALUE - INDIAN AND WESTERN APPROACH	239
VIII	FREEDOM: AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE	261
IX	SĀKṢIN AND THE PROBLEM OF JĪVĀNMUKTI	287

S E C T I O N   I

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

Whereas the sciences deal with matters of fact and technology with the application of scientific knowledge for a greater and more effective realization of the goals and ends of man, the sciences, even the social sciences, avoid a discussion of the values, goals and ends of man and seek to keep their disciplines value-neutral or value-free. In recent times science and technology have taken enormous strides and have put at man's disposal unforeseen power. It is, however, obvious that without a sound and wise deliberation of values and goals, the enormous power made available by science and technology may ill serve man. Greater efficiency in means by itself cannot make up for lack of clarity and wisdom in ends, indeed if our ends are foolishly chosen, the greater the power of the means, the greater the harm it brings to us. It is therefore, important that along with science and technology, philosophy especially moral and social philosophy is given a serious place in the concerns of society and mankind. Man is a valuing being, and men and societies are ever called upon to make value choices and take decisions about the goals they wish to pursue and directions they ought to follow. In a world where science and technology is developing very rapidly, the value implications of such developments and their desirability or

otherwise must also be judged. No amount of scientific knowledge and technological advancement can render this exercise - of value assessment - superfluous, irrelevant or unnecessary. Thus the need for a study of philosophy, especially philosophy of life, which is primarily concerned with a deliberation on ends and values of man.

### Need and Relevance of Indian Philosophy

One may agree with me on the question of need for study of philosophy, especially philosophy of life, but question whether it is necessary or desirable to spend one's time and efforts in a study of Indian philosophy. Western opinions of Indian philosophy have come a long way from Schweitzer's 'Indian Thought and its Development' in which he characterized Indian philosophy as life - negating and pessimistic. But it is surprising how such an impression - that Indian philosophy is negative, escapist, pessimistic ascetic, other-worldly, does not give any importance to the physical and mental needs of the individual but concentrates on the esoteric and the spiritual only etc. - still prevails among the laymen and even the intelligensia. Given such a negative and pessimistic outlook, it is asked, what useful purpose will be served by a study and dissemination of such a philosophy? Has not Indian philosophy lost its relevance and become obsolete? May it not even be harmful in the modern contemporary times?

On the other hand, the Western outlook on life has brought to mankind the tremendous benefits of modern science and technology. Is it not superior, the philosophy for our times? If at all we should take out time from the all important pursuit of science and empirical knowledge, should we not invest it in a study and adoption of Western philosophy?

The charge of escapism, pessimism, and life-negating is based on a superficial and partial reading of Indian philosophy and values: e.g. an emphasis on mokṣa to the exclusion of dharma, artha and kāma, ignoring of ideal of jīvanamukti, fulfillment and joy, Grahasthāshrama, Karma yoga and so on, and is more an outcome of bias and pre-conceived notions against it than of a serious and scholarly understanding of it. We shall make an attempt here to present the diverse aspects of Indian values and forms of life and avoid presenting it in fragments that are selected on the basis of bias and prejudice. Indeed, a correct and fuller study of Indian culture, may show its desirability and value not only for India but for mankind at large. A fuller appreciation of this would properly emerge at the end of this endeavour, but we may just make a few remarks on this point here.

The enormous benefits of Western science and technology are too well known to require any elucidation here. But by

now the realization that not all the developments in science, and not all the changes it has brought about are for the good and benefit of mankind has also been increasingly growing. There are, in short, (a) the terrible monster of the nuclear arsenal, threatening to blow up all life on this planet.

(b) the 'over-development' of the so-called 'advanced' nations and excessive exploitation of the energy resources raising the spectre of a winter of energy exhaustion,

(c) unanticipated and to some extent anticipated consequences of high technology and industry in terms of pollution of air and water, deforestation and consequent floods, soil erosion, drying up of fresh water springs..... poisoning of water and death of fishes, and birds, increasing desecration of Nature and use of land by man for his habitation, agriculture and 'developmental' project. - All this have led to upsetting of the ecological balance which has resulted in extinction of many species of birds and animals and impoverishment of man's life.

(d) A wrong conception of the true human good and excessive emphasis on sense gratification and power, an atomistic view of man and his happiness has led to a neglect of social nature and interrelatedness of man and a disregard of the social institutions. Under pressure of



urbanisation and an industrial culture, the primary social groups have tended to lose their cohesion and their integrative role. As a result suffering and loneliness, a sense of alienation from the society and the rest of humanity have increased and led to greater violence and crime in society.

(e) Finally, at the individual level, the fundamental problem of man, the question of worth and meaning of life, has remained unsolved, rather if anything accentuated. He has set his heart on the path of desire gratification and power, has yoked the best part of his thinking and energy to developing ways and means of obtaining these things more and more, and yet his life has remained empty, vacuous, bereft of meaning and fulfillment. The search for happiness through the path of desire has been a seeking of Mr. Godot, who never comes today' but will surely come tomorrow'. Frustration, loneliness, alienation and ennui mark his life. In the midst of spectacular materialistic achievements, man finds himself alone, homeless, ridden with doubt and depression.

We see, then, that the Western philosophical outlook is incomplete, imbalanced, and does not make for a healthy, happy fulfilled life. Rather it does the opposite, and has brought man to the very brink of utter destruction.

It is hardly worth emulating. Let us have a brief look at the causes of inadequacies in the Western philosophy of life. We may consider here the imbalances and shortcomings in (i) conception of values and the true good man, (ii) a faulty epistemology and (iii) a faulty view of human nature. The three are inter-related. One could even suggest that perhaps a faulty epistemology lies at the root, for this leads to a narrow, limited view of human nature, which further leads to a false conception of the true goal and good of man. However, here, it is enough for us to consider the three without discussing the validity of the causal relationship suggested above.

Inadequacies in Epistemology: In the knowledge of external world, we use our sense organs. In fact we share this fact with other sentient beings - plants and animals.

We sometimes become aware of the limitations of sense-organs. There are illusions, objective illusions, errors of perception and so on. So we apply our mind i.e., the thinking, ratiocinating ability to our observation; to refine, balance, develop and make more sophisticated our tools for gaining knowledge by use of sense organs and reflection. This is basically the scientifico-empirical method. It has stood us in good stead in the knowledge of the external world.

To regard this method as a valid method for gaining sound knowledge of human nature - just because it has succeeded in case of study of nature, so it must also succeed in knowledge of man-this requires examination.

There are various ways of understanding this proposition:

- (a) Empirico-scientific, observation- rational method is a valid way of knowing about the whole man, all dimensions of human self are accessible to systematised and trained observation, and there are no dimensions, aspects of human life left out from the scope of this method;
- (b) There may be aspects of human self which are not available to science and technology but they have no importance whatsoever, they don't count, so that we need not be bothered about them in our search for a true conception of human happiness, social planning etc.
- (c) Scientific-empirical method can give us knowledge about only some aspects or dimensions of the human self. There are other aspects, and important ones which are not accessible to the senses and the intellect of man, but man does not have any valid method other than the scientific-empirical available to him, so he has no choice but to ignore these other dimensions until such time that further progress in the scientific-empirical makes it possible to apply it to all aspects of man's personality or some other intersubjectively acceptable valid methods are discovered.

Contrary to the above, we have the position that for knowledge of important aspects of man's self the scientific empirical method is not appropriate, that other methods, are and have been available, and that through the use of these alternative method and techniques we can gain sound knowledge of human nature which alone can form the basis for an adequate philosophy of life. A philosophy of life which restricts itself to the scientific-empirical is bound to be inadequate. And yet, the Western civilization has by and large relied excessively on the scientific-empirical method for knowledge. Indeed the enthusiasm for method of Natural Sciences led to a clamour for extension of this method to the social and the human and rejection of all that showed itself to be inaccessible to this method. Thus the otherwise legitimate desire for discipline in method, when pursued to extreme led to the strange consequence of not recognising phenomena which prove too complex or different for the method in use.

Some philosophers of social sciences and social scientists indeed pointed out to the non-validity of the scientific method beyond the sphere of natural objects, pointing out that social phenomena and human actions are shot through with meanings and purposes, the agents reasons' and concepts, unlike the objects of nature. These

features require a modification in our approach. But even so, we are still operating within the sphere of sense organs and rational faculties, though the meaning of rational faculties modifies narrow deductive reasoning. In addition to the senses and the rational faculties, man also has esoteric faculties, the higher intuition, the supersensuous and the super-rational, the yogic and meditational, the mystic and religious consciousness. Even though some social scientists and philosophers have paid some attention to the question of meaning and development of methods suitable for study of meaning, little attention has been paid to the esoteric modes of consciousness. As a result there is an excessive and unhealthy dependence on the verdict of the senses and deductive reasoning; due to the limitations that beset them, the view of reality is unnecessarily narrowed and restricted. Aspects of reality which are not accessible to the empirical and rational are left unknown and understood, unintegrated in our life. This leaves our knowledge of reality too narrow, emaciated, one sided and poor.

"More importantly, cultivation of surface values and a narrow restrictive epistemology, leads to a very poor and one-sided view of human nature. Man has a body and a rational mind, no doubt, but this by no means can be said to give a complete view of man. He has moral, aesthetic,

spiritual dimensions also. As has been pointed out by psychologists also and as has been recognised by the religious/spiritual traditions since ancient times, there is not only the rational, linear, analytic, mode of consciousness, but also a rational, intuitive, holistic mode of human consciousness. For a complete knowledge of human nature and a true conception of his happiness we need to explore both modes of consciousness and take into account the informations of all aspects of his self.

Lack of a conscious deliberation on values and the adoption of kāma (pleasure) and artha (power, wealth, fame) as the major if not the only goals of life, a limited, faulty, inadequate epistemology, a narrow, incomplete view of man and his destiny-these are the three great banes of contemporary civilization. Their harmful effects are there for all sensitive, thinking people to observe and mourn."\*

When we turn to the Indian philosophy of life, there is a refreshing change. From a civilization of imbalances and excesses we feel the presence of a mature and wise perspective on life. Whether it is a view of human nature, or of the true good of man, or again of valid means of knowledge, here we have the hallmarks of completeness and comprehensiveness. Considering the true goals of man's life,

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\* See my "India and Her Role in the World"

the Indian mind recognises the value of pleasure, desire satisfaction and power, but it is also aware of its limitations and includes dharma and mokṣa also in the pursuits of life. In fact it points to the trivial and transient nature of kāma and artha and urges man to seek dharma and mokṣa also.

Similarly, Indian philosophers have not confined their vision of man to the physical and the mental alone. Man is body, as he is a vital, a mental and a knowing being. But he is not only these. There are the aesthetic, religious, spiritual, transcendental dimensions of his self also. In any account of human nature that is to be complete and comprehensive, these aspects and different levels of consciousness have to be included. Indeed, the sages and rishis have pointed out that the physical, mental and other obvious, observable aspects of man's self are not the profound truths about man. The self, that transcends the empirical and the rational is the essential truth of man. Not until has man explored and realized his true self, can be hope to find the true meaning of his existence and attain fulfillment. The Indian philosophical climate has been most conducive to in-depth exploration of the deeper and still deeper mysteries of human consciousness. Their sustained and profound explorations make invaluable contributions to man's search for a true view of himself.

For instance, they have talked of five sheaths of the self, Annamaya, prānamaya, manomaya, vijnānamaya and ānandamaya. Again man is not only regarded as a bhoktā and Kartā (experiencer and doer), but also as (pure witness) sudha sākshī; not only as the active saktī but also as siva, the mutable - ksar - , but also as the immutable, akṣara; attached and involved but also as free and detached. As the Īsopaniṣad says, those who only know the manifest, or those who only know the unmanifest know not and perish. But those who know both the manifest and the unmanifest, knowledge of both the finite and the infinite cross the ocean of suffering and attain the realm of immortality. These larger visions have protected Indian civilisation from the baneful excesses of a too narrow, superficial and materialistic outlook.

The spirit of wholeness which characterizes Indian conception of man and his goals, is also evident in theory of knowledge. Perception and inference are no doubt regarded as valid sources of knowledge, but recognition is given to the esoteric methods also. Yogic contemplation, mystic intuition, supersensuous, direct, immediate realization which transcends the senses and the mind and wherein distinctions of subject, object and knowledge are obliterated are important, even the more important ways of exploring and knowing the truth about man and the world. Rather than shunning them as beyond the purview of philosophical



discourse, elaborate methods for their development and sophistication were explored. The knowledge gained through these methods not only supplements the ordinary knowledge but radically transforms our vision. Limitations of the senses and the reasoning faculty of man are not allowed to determine the view of reality and confine us to its narrow segments glimpsed through these means.

The Indian philosophical outlook, then having avoided the mistakes of narrowness and lopsidedness in epistemology, view of man and his goals, provides us with a healthy and corrective alternative to the Western civilization which as we have seen above has taken a path that has made man's life unwholesome and brought it to near extinction.

\*             \*             \*             \*

Thus we can say that contemporary man stands at the crossing of the roads, two paths open up before him. There is the path of power and glory, science and high technology with its dazzling achievements. Paradoxically and unfortunately for man the peaks of achievements have been scaled by divorcing science from considerations of value and human well-being in the holistic perspective. However, as has been recognized by the religious and mystic traditions of the East all things and beings are interrelated and partake of the One life. A mad, uninhibited rush for pleasure

and power tends to obscure this truth. It makes one view the others as competitors and tends to destroy the sense of fellowship with other human beings and unity of life. Right perspective on our relationship to nature is lost. Rather than being seen as the matrix of our living, and the essential condition of our good life, Nature and other forms of life are viewed as mere objects, things to be exploited. The deterioration of the environment and its adverse effects on human life has forced the realization of the organic nature of the ecosystem. But the relentless march of technology in the name of technology goes on, the protests of the environment groups and conservationists seem to make little or no difference to the mainstream current of 'development' and 'progress'. Man continues to sow, nay water and nourish the seeds of annihilation. On this way there is no happiness nor peace but only war, destruction, and fear. At the individual level the problem of suffering remains unsolved, the removal of suffering requires a look inward, and examination of the desire-life, a correct understanding of the workings of the mind as well as a re-training of it. Unless the mind is re-formed and changed, it will continue to produce misery, no matter what the external conditions. Only the referrents of desire and misery vary with the variations in the outer circumstances. The accumulation of things without a mutation of the mind

produces further more seeking, grabbing, greed discontent or in the end satiety, ennui and despair. Mere development of the economy and the conditions of life without a development of the individual is in vain. We (at least in India who have a long tradition of exploration and development of the mind), ought to seriously question the characterization of a country as 'developed' and 'advanced' on the criteria of technology and money. Such a description may be in keeping with the spirit of Western civilization but there is no reason why we in India and Asia should accept the criteria of power and money as over-riding the other, in fact, more important considerations of the quality of mind and life. Here again the quality of life should not be confused with the standard of living which is determined by the ludicrous criteria of levels of consumption implying that goodness and nobility, freedom and fulfillment of life are to be measured in terms of money spent and things consumed. Nor by the quality of mind is to be understood a mere superiority in analytic ability or ratiocination, which again are the abilities most useful to science and technology that we have today, a product of the linear, analytic, pragmatic mode of consciousness, divorced from and determined to keep out the larger considerations of needs and values of a complete human being. A good mind must be viewed in terms of an integrated development of the

mind. Concern with values and ends of life and not merely an exclusive preoccupation with the instruments and means of life in the name of science and specialization; with the intuitive, holistic mystical modes of consciousness and not their banishment to some esoteric groups once again in the name of respectable science; with friendship, love, goodness, beauty of human relationships and nature; with moral and spiritual laws, freedom and liberation and not only with pleasure, money and power (with mokṣa and dharma and not just with artha and kama; with prajña, dhyāna and samādhi and not only with tarka and pratyakṣa with jñāna and viveka and not only with blind action in fulfillment of saṃskāra-produced vāsanās), with discrimination, knowledge and inquiry to find the true nature of self and not only with blind instinctual action; it is in terms of these that the quality and goodness of mind is to be judged. Indeed we must not use uncritically the notions of 'development', 'progress', 'advancement', etc. to evaluate and orient trends and forms of our cultural, national life for these terms embody values and criteria of a view of life, the dominant technological materialist way of the West and it is only intellectual inertia and lack of self-consciousness and alertness which lends an air of superiority or universality to it. In fact, this way of life is lop-sided un-balanced, and in the final analysis unwholesome for man.

If the 'rationalistic' technological civilization of the West continues to hold sway and engulf greater and greater number of cultures under its blinding influence, the fate of man is sad indeed. Already it has brought man to a sorry impasse, on the brink of disaster. Perhaps man's hurling into the chasm of annihilation has already been rendered inevitable by the misplaced excesses of a value-neutral technological civilization. If at all there is hope, it lies in a turning, a journey to the East for mature wisdom and a whole-some, greater, comprehensive philosophy of life.

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For us in India it is all the more important to study and understand clearly the traditional Indian philosophical outlook.

First of all, the simple reason for the need of such a study is that our past is a part of us. It is woven into the very fabric of our life. In the absence of a proper study and understanding, we continue to be influenced by the past in an unself-conscious manner.

We may have a confused and unrecognised reaction to the past which may warp and bias our outlook, or an understood admiration and acceptance of its presuppositions might colour our life.

Or perhaps we may have a confused mixture of both; at some level a pre-rational, instinctual sort of love and acceptance mixed with reaction and negative feelings. In all cases it is important that these unexamined beliefs and biases be brought out into the open and their right place and worth seen in the clear light of consciousness. Today, there is a lot of confusion among the Indians about the nature of their own tradition and culture and their place and role in contemporary times. Philosophy is the highest articulation of a culture, its ways of living and behaving, its traditions of thought and relating to the world. As such it attempts to provide a coherent and consciously thought out account of the traditions and attitudes of a society. And it is extremely important for any people to have a clear and sound understanding of their own past, their world view, their forms of life.

Our responses to the problems, challenges and issues that we face will be wise and of a durable nature if they are rooted in or have emerged from an understanding of our traditions and forms of life. Such responses are more acceptable as they appear continuous, in harmony with and not alien to our ways. Also they are safer and pragmatic - for being in harmony with the tradition they can be considered not to produce cataclystic effects. Sudden breaks with the past may create a shock, a disorientation, a sense of

loss which may turn out to be traumatic. Threats to sense of continuity and belongingness may create a crisis of identity, which does more harm than mere economic deprivation or even defeat in war or lagging behind in science or intellectual fields. For the crisis of identity causes a loss of confidence, bewilderment and confusion, which may eat at the very will to live and flourish - it may sap the 'elan' of a people. It is therefore important that we are aware of our traditions, our culture and history, to foster the sense of belongingness and continuity, assurance and legitimate pride in it, to live it, cherish it and initiate the younger generations into it with love and respect.

This is not to deny a place of healthy criticism and assessment, growth and development of the traditions. But to be genuine, meaningful and constructive, such a critical assessment must emerge from our own attempts to have a clearer and better understanding of it, when we articulate our tradition we set in motion a process which shows up inconsistencies, gaps, inadequacies, and challenges in the contemporary context. This kind of criticism serves a useful purpose: without losing our roots, we give ourselves an opportunity to do the necessary pruning and bring to light and focus aspects of tradition which need it. This is, of course, very different from a wholesale depreciation of our culture from the point of view of one of

the competing alien ideologies. Such wholesale rejection is the breeding ground of loss of roots and identity, bring anguish and suffering, nihilism, skepticism and anarchism. Further, having lost respect for our own forms of living, language and the conceptual framework, the members of such a society attempt to think in borrowed categories and concepts, borrowed languages and idiom — the unfortunate results are lack of creativity and genuine thinking; and further irrelevance of such a theoretical activity for practical guidance. Lack of creativity occurs because of the use of borrowed categories and concepts which are the products of, and are rooted in different, alien, social practices and milieu. Theory cannot be divorced from practice, subtle though the ways may be in which culture affects thought. Only when thought is rooted in actual practice, is related to the ways of living, can it have the characteristics of being living and dynamic. It gets nourishment and life from the culture it is rooted in, and in turn articulates and enlightens the practices. When the theory is germane to the social practice, it helps reform, guide, restructure practice. Practice, in turn, sets direction for, informs, and throws up further problems for theory. In the absence of this relationship, theory loses life, vibrance, creativity, and becomes shallow, sterile, stilted and abstracted. The practice, without the benefit of



intellectual deliberations becomes blind and directionless and leads to fumbings and unintelligent clamour.

## Chapter Two

### DESIRE - LIFE AND BEYOND

#### Search for Happiness

While discussing the question of goals of life, a few general remarks about the notion of happiness from the Indian perspective are in order. The ordinary mind is outward-oriented and ever strives to make it a better and better world - meaning thereby a better material environment. However, no matter how different, 'better', the environment, the novelty wears off this is important for sometime the mind enjoys the new invention and the new excitement - but soon it gets weary of it - the thing is no more able to yield the pleasure and the excitement - and so the mind must seek something different, something new. Indeed, the salesmen and producers are aware of this and see to it that 'new' models and 'new' gadgets are ever being provided. The unanalysing mind, the gullible individual does not see through this and is tricked - may be duped into believing that the 'new' thing will surely give him deep joy and fulfilment. But of course the new thing in turn, turns sour.

Then there is the unexamined instinctive belief that happiness is a matter of accumulation of moments of excitement and pleasure. If such moments do keep coming at regular intervals then life is worth living - and not a meaningless chore.

The novelty fallacy is not difficult to see through - a look into our experience and we see the weakness of it. But when it is combined with the accumulation fallacy then the resultant effect is complex and seem to have a compelling effect on the mind. So this requires to be scrutinised.

The gratification of senses with sense-objects and agreeable stimulants does not, cannot, produce lasting satisfaction because of the nature of mind that it produces. Such a mind seeks sense - objects, but as it attains one, it posits another: it gets conditioned in taking pleasure in the sensation of desiring and all that goes with it: the excitement, the stimulation to effort, the challenge, the game, the feeling of adventure, meeting the challenge and overcoming hurdles, the joy of achievement. Therefore no matter what it attains, it needs to posit and pursue another goal, perhaps for the first few times the search is pleasurable - but later degenerates into a futile motion of going around and around in circles ever hoping that the next times one will attain IT - The Fulfilment, Final Satisfaction. But in the pursuit of things of the world that next time never comes.

The mind that is habituated to seeking ever new excitements, renders what it has got as stale and of no value in providing the required kick, and thus follows a path

of endless and futile search. As the youth wearies off and the energies deplete, it remains no more an exciting and challenging game. Eventually the individual is bound to lose - his senses weakened, his energies sapped - and yet his desires as vigorous and perhaps even stronger than before.

The desire mind is essentially a dualistic mind. It seeks something, wishes to avoid something - the agreeable and the disagreeable respectively. It being its nature, no matter what the external situation, it continues to categorize the world in these categories:

As long as this is so, all its achievement and successes end in, are bound to end in futility - for having moved from point a to b, it views the situation at point b also in the same two categories - and suffers the relentless operation of the mind - pleasant - good, versus unpleasant - bad; resulting in pitiable efforts of the mind to maintain, keep, obtain the one and avoid, destroy, not get the other. In this sea-saw its energy is wasted - he loses peace and finds no joy. He loses vitality, energy, original goodness and capacity to observe detachedly and enjoy.

If we observe closely man's sojourn in the world, we find that he seeks (a) moments of gratification, some particular joy, or sense - excitement having had which he turns away from it for something different, new or (b) more commonly he seeks to 'raise' his level of existence, his

'standard of living' so that the gratifications are easily available to him. At any level he imagines that life at the next rung of the social economic ladder is superior and will provide him with more satisfactions. Of course, at this next rung, he looks forward to the still next and so on. This second may be a little more deceptive and difficult to pierce through as here the illusion and the 'charm' are concerning a composite whole (a man seeking a promotion in his job, or seeking a better job, emigration to another country and so on). But the same considerations of disillusionment, novelty wearing off, jadedness, discernment of pain and pleasure at the new level etc. apply here also.

In brief the belief that happiness is a matter of having moment of gratification in life, or a collection of such moments, is a fallacious belief and won't stand a critical examination.

The reason for man's dissatisfaction with his attainments at the material level also lies in the fact that man's true search consists of something different. What he seeks is a complete eradication of all wants and weaknesses. He seeks nothing less than perfection, completeness, fullness and that no amount of moments of gratification can give him. What he seeks can be obtained only by removing ignorance about himself, false beliefs about himself. A training of the mind, an understanding of the mind and its dualistic nature,

or retraining of the mind, a deconditioning so that it ceases to waste itself, its rigour energy and vitality in conflict, in the eventually losing game of keeping and obtaining only the pleasant and rejecting and avoiding the unpleasant - it is such a training that can yield for him what he truly seeks.

IN SHORT : The fact that the mind turns everything

- (1) into something OLD, and thus ceases to get enjoyment from it and
- (2) seeking pleasure tries to avoid pain; it turns itself in a state of conflict and wearies itself off - narrows its vision- distorts its judgement.

If he stops this sort of functioning of the mind and learns to observe with detachment whatever comes, it quietens the mind and reveals the substratum self-consciousness, the Original Mind which is Perfection.

Thus running after things and situations is the wrong direction to take; what is important is to understand this and train the mind in its light.

For man's happiness, goal of man's life then, what is required is this inward turning.

It is here that Indian Philosophy and culture has to make an important contribution.

### The Four Goals of Life

We have said above that the search for happiness through pursuit of pleasure, ambition and other goals of this kind cannot bring genuine satisfaction to man, but rather must end in futility and failure. This naturally raises the question whether Indian philosophy accords any place to the pursuit of this-worldly concerns, or whether its rejection of these is total so that, its descriptions as 'life-negating', 'other-worldly', 'pessimistic' or 'ascetic' etc. are apt. In order to fully appreciate the place and role accorded to these, we should consider in some detail the Indian theory of purushārthas, the four goals of life.

The four goals that are considered to be the legitimate concerns of man are (1) kāma, (2) artha, (3) dharma and (4) mokṣa.

Kāma : Kāma refers to the pursuit of sensual pleasure. It is recognised that desire for sense-pleasures, excitement, agreeable sensations is more or less naturally embedded in man. As a result he likes and creates beautiful things, objects pleasing to look at, touch, taste, hear or smell. The pervasiveness of the sexual motif and romantic love in our life, literature, poetry, music art, painting, entertainment and its commercial exploitation, the large amount of activity and thought which centres around the

sexual testifies to the importance of pleasure in our life. Also consider the amount of time and activities devoted to food and eating pleasures, to the production and use of nice smells and scents, pleasing sounds, songs and music, and the tactile pleasures. It does not require any great percipacity of mind to see that indeed a major part of our pursuit and enjoyment of sense- pleasures is devoted to activities which derive their meaning and purpose from sense- pleasures of one kind or the other.

Artha: The second goal of life recognised to be a legitimate one is 'artha' which includes in it, pursuit of money, power, name and fame success and ambition etc. While money is primarily a means for acquisition of pleasure giving objects or for name and fame; success, power and ambition etc. may be pursued for their own sake, as they have their roots in a desire to excel, to exceed, to outshine and lead. Victory campaigns, and wars, but also many useful inventions and discoveries, and works of philanthropy and general welfare are attributable to this purushārtha.

Before we proceed to 'dharma' and 'mokṣa', a few remarks about kāma, and artha are in order.

1. In accepting kāma and artha as legitimate goals of life, Indian philosophy of life has taken its point of departure a realistic appraisal of man's wants. It starts



with what men actually pursue and seeks to lay true foundations for the higher.

2. In according them the place of purushārthas, it sanctions their pursuit, in fact, encourages their pursuit, and waits till one comes to a realization of the limitations of desire life\* and looks for some higher, nobler goals, at which stage it comes forward with 'dharma' and 'mokṣa'. The acceptance of kāma and artha and also of dharma and mokṣa as higher displays a profound psychological insight into the nature of man and his pursuit of value and happiness. What is important here is a man's stage of life, experiential age, level of understanding, preparedness, his readiness. It is true that at some stage of one's life, usually during one's youth and early middle age, a man is enchanted by the objects of kāma and artha and at that time he is hardly prone to heed any talk about the limitations and disillusionment of desire life. As such it is best to wait, to let him have a go at it, to pursue these vigorously, so that he comes to see for himself, through his own experiences, the limitations and dead-ends of desire life. But once a man realizes that kāma and artha yield no true satisfaction, his attention must be pointed to alternative goals, which do hold the possibility of offering him genuine satisfaction. Indeed, just as at the earlier stage,

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\* Desire life refers to life dedicated to kāma and artha.

denial of kāma and artha would produce bitterness, resentment and deny him growth, at the latter stage, non-availability of higher values would lead to ennui, loss of meaning, cynicism and turn his life sour and stale.

The limitations of desire- life may be briefly considered below:

(i) The pursuit of desire normally involves a certain amount of stress, varies though it does with the strength, ability, motivations and attitude of the agent and the task at hand. But after the excitement and charm of the game has been worn off by repetitions, the stress tends to climb higher and higher. The sheer labour, worry, anxiety, the vascillation between hope and fear, anticipation of achievement and despair of failure, jealousy, anger, frustration mark a life devoted to pursuit of desire and progressively weighs down a person more and more with the advancement in years.

Tension, insecurity, restlessness, fear and regrets mark the pursuit of kāma and artha. At some stage the ardousness of the task and the uncertainty of outcome may be taken in good cheer, as a challenge to be manfully met, but with the wearing off of novelty and youth, the same plunge a man into sorrow and despair.

(ii) Marked as the pursuit of desire is with these shortcomings, the case is made worse by the outcome of it all. Obviously painful and frustrating is the thwarting of the

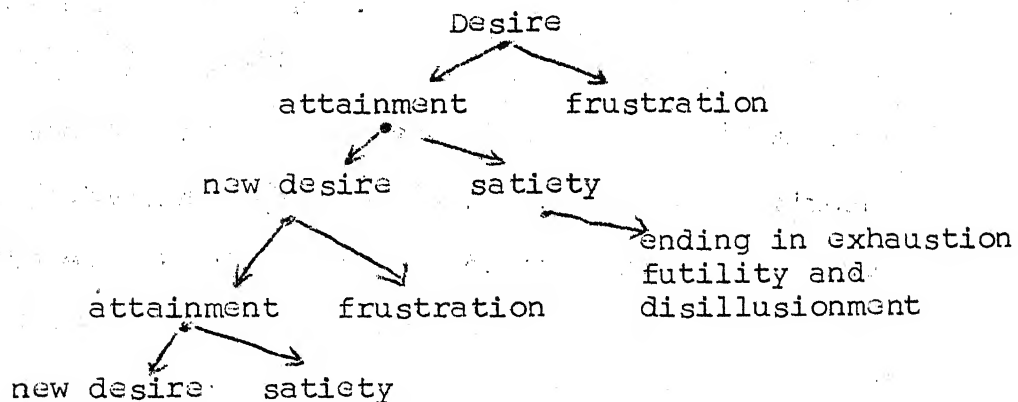
desire. A man puts in hard labour and goes through the entire gamut of emotions between hope and fear, and if at the end he reaps only failure, the result is pain, heartburn, depression and sometimes worse - a loss of self-confidence. Misery in pursuit, misery in end.

The situation is not much better in case a person does succeed in achieving the object of one's desire. No doubt it gives him some satisfaction, but the pleasure is transient, sooner or later it is spent off. More likely however even while the agent is savouring the all too brief joy of attainment of a desire, he sets his sight on something still 'greater', 'higher' than the one just achieved. The horizon of desire is an ever receding one.... or as the Gita says

Not by satisfying do the desires come to an end. Ever they increase, just as the fire blazes even more by the feeding in of ablutions to it.

The new desire sets him on the path of further action and effort marked by hope, fear, and anxiety etc. as in the previous case and again it will end up either in frustration if not fulfilled, or become a stepping stone to still another desire and so on. Perhaps after the game has been played for a few times, the pursuit and even satisfaction of desire lead only to ennui, a feeling of satiety and a sense of emptiness. The whole process eventually ends up in

disillusionment. In the glow of youth a man ventures into the path of desire, full of enthusiasm and hope, confidence and vigour, believing that in the pursuit of desires and attainment of some objects lies his happiness, the goal of man's life - these are the things that man really wants and having gotten them will live 'happily ever-after'. But having gone through this, having spent the best part of his years and vitality, and having tasted the bitter-sweet fruit of desire-life, man finds himself in a state of sad realization that this was not after-all what he truly wanted. He had sought true happiness and fulfilment through this path, but what he found was only a quagmire, a seemingly endless cycle of desire - frustration, attainment - desire- attainment, satiety



Dharma: We have considered above the first two purushārthas, namely kāma and artha and have seen their limitations.

Eventually they fail to satisfy man and fulfil his quest for life Eternal and Lasting Happiness - Anand. They are, therefore to be regarded as legitimate but provisional goals of man.

Legitimate - because a craving for them seems to be deep rooted in man and a certain experience of their pursuit and enjoyment is necessary to become aware of their limited nature. Without an actual lived experience of going through them, a person may harbour the illusion of considering them to be the be- all and end- all of his existence. The lived experience removes the illusion and sets him free-free to pursue his true goal.

They are provisional because once he tastes them and is confronted with their limitations - ephemeral nature of the satisfactions they provide and their triviality, he cannot stay there and must go beyond seeking the true objects of his pursuit. This brings us to Dharma and Moksa.

Dharma is a very rich concept and connotes a number of things. Historically it may be traced to the Vedic literature. Rta refers to the idea that the universe is a uni-verse, a cosmos and not a chaos and is governed by some laws. Rta, refers to the 'ordered' nature of the universe, the Cosmic Law. Dharma refers to the idea that there is order and law at the human and social levels too.

Dharma means that which 'holds' 'keeps together', 'sustains'. In the context of nature it 'refers to laws of nature, the essential characteristics of natural phenomena as e.g. it is the 'dharma' of fire to burn. In that sense it refers to that which makes a thing what it is.

In the context of society, it refers to the laws, norms, mores, customs and traditions etc. followed in a society. These values and norms govern the conduct of its members and define the nature, extent rightness or wrongness of mutual interactions of the members. Without these norms and codes of conduct (well understood and followed by the members, even though they may not be so well articulated) there will be chaos and utter confusion, in fact, no society. It is the 'dharma' of a society, then that 'upholds' it and keeps it as a society. That any society has code of conduct and set of norms, values etc. is a universal fact about all societies, but, of course, the actual norms followed differ from society to society. Each society then, has its own dharma, which is however, not static. Due to its own internal movement, as a result of interactions with other societies and normative systems, there are changes in the dharma of any society.\*

At the individual level, we may speak of the principles and norms which are followed for an integrated personality, and for growth and fullest development of the self. Further, some principles may be regarded as essential for growth of any member, regardless of his station while observance of some rules and cultivation of some virtues is relative to the station that an individual occupies.

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\* Whether there are norms and values which transcend society and have a universal validity for any human society, adds another dimension to this interesting question.

In the context of Hindu Society, the latter of these is referred to by Varnāshrama dharma, and the former is denoted by Sāmānya Dharma.

Varna Ashrama points to a division of society into four castes namely Brāhman, Kṣatriya, Vaisya and Sūdra and four stages of life namely Brahmcharya, Grahastha, Vānaprastha and Sanyāsa.

In brief, the Brāhmins are the scholars, scientists priests, men of knowledge and seekers of truth. Their duties are teaching, studying, conducting sacrifices and rituals and their virtues: Love of knowledge, austerity, truthfulness, non-possessiveness perseverance.

The Kṣatriya refers to the class of administrators, warriors, fighters and rulers. As they are the executive, and the ruling caste, courage, bravery, ability to take decisions, steadfastness, a strong will-power and qualities of leadership, — these are the qualities that are expected of them.

The Vaisyas refer to the class engaged in production and management of money and materials, trade, agriculture, cattle-raising, business and industry fall in the scope of their legitimate activities. Thrift, honesty, liberality, business acumen, initiative, philanthropy are their virtues.

Manual labour and service of the other three castes are the works of the Sūdras, and sincerity, humility, and a sense of dedication their virtues.

Coming to the Āshramas, the Brahmcharya āshram, generally to continue to the age of twenty five, is the time for acquisition of knowledge, skills, culture and values which are relevant for man as such and those that are appropriate to their cast. The student was to live in close association with the teachers in the centres of learning which during those days were situated in the forests. This provided for not only learning of skills and knowledge, but also for character and cultivation of values.

Having acquired the required knowledge and skills with which the youngman could contribute to the society and have a source of income to support himself and his family, he was expected to marry and raise a family - i.e., enter Grahastha-ashrama. This āshrama was regarded as a vital stage in man's life, both from the point of view of his self development and for society. The brahmachāri, the vānaprasthi and even the sanyāsi looked upto the gr̥hasthī for support. The householder's dharma included not only the support of fellow human beings in other āshramas, the poor and the destitute, but also making offerings for the gods, ancestors, animals, birds and even insects. Indeed, all creatures fell into the scope of his care and sustenance.



After a full life in the gr̥hastha and having experienced the joys of kāma and artha under the guiding force of dharma, a man was physically and mentally ready to turn to a life of nivṛtti, a life of renunciation from the worldly affairs and engagement in a quest for the Highest. The life of a vānaprasthi marks a gradual detachment from the narrow confines of a family and group and expansion of his interests to community, society and eventually humanity at large. The vānaprasthi uses his knowledge, experience and energies for the service and betterment of society and gradually wears himself away from the bonds and sufferings caused by identification with the body.

He perfects his renunciation from a life governed by a narrow limited ego to soar freely in the realms of freedom and Love universal as a Sanyāsi. Free from aversion and attachment, selfishness and ego, indeed from all desire and ego-inspired purpose, he wanders, immersed in joy the fount of which is within himself. The culmination of sanyāsa is in jīvanmukti, attainment of mokṣa the highest puruṣārtha.

The question of whether the caste (varṇa) of a person was to be decided by qualities and achievement or by birth is not easy to answer. There are statements even in the classic law givers which seem to point to actions and virtues of persons as determinants of their caste. Manu says that a brāhmin who does not exhibit the virtues expected, and

actions expected of a brāhmin, is a 'brāhmin' only in a way in which a wooden 'elephant' is called an elephant. The Gīta says that the four castes have been created by the Lord on the basis of quality ( ) and actions (Karma ). Whatever the origins, it appears certain, however, that during the course of time, caste took on rigidity and birth came to be regarded as the only factor. In that sense it points to a rigidly divided society to which stagnation social injustice, exploitation of the weak and many other social ills have been attributed. And in that sense, of course, it can hardly be recommended as a source of value and norms of conduct.

Similarly, life span of man cannot be strictly and evenly divided into 4 parts of twenty five years each as prescribed by the institutions of ashramas. The average life span in India is far lower than 100 years. Many professions and higher education takes one well beyond the age of twenty five and the modern system of education does not provide for the students living in Gurkulas or hermitages of their gurus in the forests. The demands of an active householder's life exceed the age of fifty--- and there are no forest dwellings contiguous to human settlements to which a person can retire for vānaprastha. The Varnāshram institutions, like other social institutions are integral parts of a way of life, a total cultural milieu and we can hardly graft them to a different era, age, socio-cultural geographical and natural environment.

And yet if we pay attention to the essence, the rational core of the varnāshrama institutions, and not to the details, we may indeed find that the idea has some relevance and contribution to make to our own times and own search for a moral social code to govern and live life by.

Essentially the Varnāshrama institutions highlight the fact that individuals differ, with regard to their attitudes, qualities, merits and weaknesses, achievements and failures; and also the level of maturity and worldly experience. The former may be regarded as the rational core of the idea of caste, while the latter that of āshrama. Each person may ask himself the question "what is my caste?" and think, judge, analyse, reflect on his interests, aptitudes, pre-dispositions, preferences, qualities, actions, achievements, values and goals of life to answer it. It is not necessary that he must label himself as belonging to one of the four traditional castes. The main point is to take stock of the kind of person he is and the direction of his self unfoldment. If the idea of caste refers to relatively abiding characteristics and potentialities of a person, āshrama refers to the stage of world experience he is at. In childhood and youth a man is generally inquisitive, needing to and prepared to learn and acquire skills; full of confidence and aspirations, having some taste and a desire for the pleasure of life. He also considers this to be a time of learning and apprenticeship

and so willingly sacrifices them for expected greater future joys. At the end of studentship he generally marries, sets up a household and takes upon himself a new sets of duties and obligations. And so also the stage of gradual disenchantment with the life of kāma and artha pursued in gr̥hastha, the stage of Vānaprastha and its culmination in Sanyāsa.

In deciding his 'dharma', duties and norms, it is important that a person carefully considers both his abiding traits and the stage of his development - (his mental, experiential age).

Indeed taken in this spirit, varṇāshrama along with sāmānya dharma (as discussed below), may serve a most important purpose - the providing of a framework for determination of one's role, duties and obligations, norms and laws to guide one's life by. Under the impact of Western civilization and empirico-scientific norms of rationality, a thinking individual in India, as in most other parts of the world today, is not willing to accept a code of conduct or moral norms merely because it has been sanctioned by tradition or some scriptural authority. He must question and examine the held beliefs. But even to be able to examine and judge, a man must have before him some considerations which provide the frame of reference. Varnāshram provides such a point of reference. Thought, reflection, books, a look at the traditions, human nature and even a recourse to scriptures may all play their proper role in answering the questions so raised.

As mentioned above, the sāmānya dharma point to the norms and virtues the cultivation of which is regarded as essential or at least conducive to the highest maturing and flowering of a human being, integration of personality and fullest self-development. Further, such norms are valid regardless of the station and stage of the individuals. In the yoga literature, a list of five yamas (Ahimsā, satya, asatya, brahmacharya, aparigraha ) and five niyamas (Sauch, Santosh, tapa, svādhyāya, Iswara pranidhān) has been given. A widely accepted list of sāmānya dharma is as follows:

Perseverance, forgiveness, control of the mind, non-stealing, purity control of the senses, intelligence, knowledge, truthfullness and non-anger; these are the ten marks of dharma. The value of these virtues for a higher life is evident. Control of the senses and the mind is a necessary step for self-discipline and mastery; purity of the mind, forgiveness and an attitude of non-greed are essential for a peaceful quiet and un-agitated mind; these along with perseverance, cultivation of intelligence and pursuit of truth enable one to protect them from useless scattering and futile agitations and yoke and harness them for bringing about an integration of the self and living a higher life.

Thus dharma may be said to refer to principles of success, provide foundations of true, abiding achievements and this is true whether with regard to the materialistic achievements in the sphere of kāma and artha, or to the highest goal of mokṣa. With the power gathered from a life of discipline a man may reap fruits of materialistic success ; but he may also dedicate his energies to the highest Truth and break the bondage and suffering of a narrow, limited life to enter the larger, greater life of infinite being and lasting bliss.

## Chapter Three

### KARMA YOGA

It has been said (in the Bhagavadgīta, e.g.) that no man can stay without doing some action or the other. Further, it is stated that ordinarily action binds. From these two statements it would seem to follow that mokṣa or freedom is denied to man. Room for freedom can be made either by denying the first or the second of these above mentioned statements.

Let us examine if the first can be made to yield freedom. This would link freedom to the possibility of zeroing the sphere of action in man's life. One could make a distinction between kriyā and karma, process and action. Physiological, biological events going on in our body, most of it usually below the conscious layer, are processes not actions. Only purposive activity may be described as action. It is obvious that as far as the processes are concerned one can't do very much about them in terms of stopping them. But he may narrow down the scope of his actions. However, it is difficult to conceive of elimination of all action from one's life even in the narrower sense, even if it were desirable. Further, action is related to conation, thought and desire, which may be traced to the liking and disliking dispositions of the mind. Eventually the rāga dveṣa may be traced to the contact of the mind through the senses with the objects of the world.

The quest for banishment of action from one's life in order to avoid its bondage would thus in the last analysis lead to the seeking of a totally still mind and still body. For even if the body were still but the mind were active, going over thoughts, feeling attachment or aversion, making plans, etc. that itself would lead to formation of saṃskāras and vāsanās, these would constitute as actions and produce good or bad binding effects for the individual. Thus this way ultimately leads to a total withdrawal from life and its various activities, its culmination point is what has been described as nirvikalpa samādhi a state of consciousness in which there is no experience of any object at all. There is no contact and it is the contact which leads to attachment/aversion, desire, conation and finally gross action at the physical level. We see that this approach to the problem takes us away from the ideal of jīvanmukti, freedom in life. It has been said that a person can stay in nirvikalpa samādhi for 21 days, and then his body would drop off. So, here we attain the ideal of freedom, mokṣa, at the cost of this physical existence.

To many this would appear to be a too austere and ascetic ideal.\* If it were possible to attain freedom/mokṣa in and through action, without banishing action, it would certainly be a more acceptable and inclusive goal. That it

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\* For a detailed consideration of questions regarding the possibility of realization outside a state of nirvikalpa samādhi, (jīvanmukti) and action - which is crucial for

contd...



is possible to so act - so that our actions not only cease

(footnote contd...)

karmayoga and niskāma - karma see the paper 'Sākṣin and the Problem of Jivanmukti' below. However, it is in order to say a few words here in appreciation of the force of nirvikalpa samādhi and insistence on cessation of all action in the highest state.

We have shown elsewhere that pain implies ego. One cannot be conscious of pain of which the locus is one's own body as pain, without ego-involvement with the body i.e., some degree of identification with the body. In the absence of such an identification, there may be an experience of some phenomena, sensations etc. but not of pain or suffering. Thus the man who suffers pain (not merely pretends or shows it), may be considered not to have succeeded in completely sundering his identification with the body. (The parenthetical remark has significance as will be shown below). As such the ego (limited, finite ego, exclusive of others, set apart from others and the world), remains, and with it the bondage. The ego, with its focus in the body (identification with the body), has desires, rāga and dvesa, anger, frustration, vāsanā, saṃskāras, and all that is bondage and suffering. Such a body-mind centred ego is limited, bereft of, lacking in many things and is bound to experience the pain and bondage of a limited self. This means that the ego is a sufficient condition for suffering, bondage, pain etc. Where there is ego, there these will also be. Even if this may be open to some question (bhakta or jñāni and his 'ego', for instance does it also produce suffering?), it seems indubitable that for pain etc. ego is a necessary condition. Realization or attainment of freedom requires, then, elimination of ego. For realization must mean elimination of pain & suffering, and that is attained when the ego is eliminated.

If pain        ego  
- ego        - pain

non-ego implies absence of pain.

i.e. if there is no ego, there is no pain.

Let us also grant that ego implies pain; for ego implies limitation and that pain. Self-realization, mokṣa, freedom implies negation of ego, because of its limited nature and consequent pain & suffering.

contd....

to be agents of bondage which they generally are, but on

(footnote contd....)

Now the following deserve attention:

1. Experience of pain and realization are not compatible, as there cannot be a detached witnessing of pain 'objectively', i.e. as an object unrelated to the self. The state of realization on the other hand by nature is free of pain etc.
2. What about rāga, dvesa etc.? Can a person experience rāga & dvesa etc. as events unrelated to him, as totally 'others' having nothing to do with him? The answer appears to be no. The experience of rāga involves a reference to the ego and implies its existence. Self-realization & ego being incompatible, rāga, dvesa and SR are incompatible. One cannot be a mere witness to rāga and dvesa for without ego involvement there would be no experience of rāga & dvesa.
3. What about samkalpa, vikalpa? Without ego, can there be samkalpa vikalpa? No. The presence of these two points to the presence of ego which negates realization/freedom. So samkalpa, vikalpas are not compatible with realization.
4. Not to speak of rāga, dvesa, samkalpa, vikalpa, can there be any experience without ego? When there is no ego, 'I', who will cognize, experience, feel, touch, see, hear, whom? What happens to the tripiti of knowledge, the three factored - knowledge: the knowledge of which the essential factors are knower, known and knowing? Once the knower is no more, and the principle of division, objectification is no more, there will be no knower and no knowing of the subject-object kind. In fact, if the world is a construction of personal consciousness, if the world of multiplicity is sustained by the ego-consciousness it will disappear. It is the ego which hinders pure experience, true realization of the nature of the True self, Sat Chit, Anand, one without the other. With the fall of ego then, there will only be a non-dualistic consciousness --- no objects, no thoughts, no experience.

contd....

the contrary, they become means of freedom and after realization its joyful expressions - this is the concern and affirmation of karma yoga. We shall elucidate this in the following sections.

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(footnote contd.... )

Keeping the above in view, does it not follow that realization, freedom, mokṣa is compatible only with a state in which there is nō dualistic experience, and no thoughts, saṃkalpas, rāga and dveṣa etc.? Mokṣa points to a state in which no experience, no cognition of any other obtains. Action, conduct (vyavahāra), even ordinary perception, all these would become impossible. No wonder then the nirvikalpa saṃādhi state is regarded as the highest and if this is all true, the only state of complete freedom. It also rules out all action, which very much requires a world of multiplicity, a mind which cognizes it, thinks, decides, sets up a goal and goes about using past knowledge and skills to achieve it. Thus the conclusion that realization or freedom is compatible only with saṃādhi. Realization is not possible without elimination of ego and the latter makes thinking, behaviour, conduct, action impossible.

## II

Karma yoga accepts the statement that no man can live without action but rejects the belief that all action binds. For it holds that there is nothing in the action itself which binds man : rather it is the egoistic involvement in its doing that brings in bondage. If the turning of action to ends of ego - gratification is avoided it ceases to bind, and in fact becomes an instrument of liberation. Action binds man in two ways: (1) It produces consequences, good or bad, which have to be suffered or enjoyed by the agent, (2) Action produces samskāras, leaves impressions on the mind of the agent giving rise to or strengthening certain dispositions which further incline the agent to follow certain direction in action and experience pleasure and pain in association with certain objects. Thus, seeds for further egoistic actions and rāga dveṣha are sown. The source of both these undesirable consequences of action is ego-involvement. Because there is a desire in the agent to bring about certain external conditions so that he may enjoy it, action has consequences which bind. Because the agent takes up action because he personally takes pleasure in it, or wishes to avoid some which bring him pain, and he seeks self-gratification in doing it, so the samskāras of further pleasure and pain, are produced. In other words, it is the doing of action for ego- gratification, on the basis of pleasure for the self, for reasons of attachment and aversion

gathered from the past, which in turn further produces and strengthens the existing knots of attachment/aversion, pleasure and pain. A fine understanding of the dynamics of action can free the person from further bondage. That will also show that while action is inseparable from life, no man can live without action, yet action itself can liberate. Man cannot stay without action because the aversions and other dispositions, properties, samskāras they have accumulated drive him to act in conformity with them. These samskāras condition him, create in him tensions, wind him up in certain directions that seek release in certain forms of reactions. Action is the forum, the way, in which these gathered tensions and propensities find expression and exhaust themselves. Provided that no new knots and windings of the psyche in certain paths are allowed, action will serve as a release mechanism for the old ones, releasing the individual from their hold. This is the secret of karma- Yoga.

But there is a big hurdle in it. The attachment to personal ego and ego-gratification, an attraction for life of attachment/aversion, pleasure and pain objects of sensual pleasure and worldly success, wealth, name and fame which have roots in a limiting of the self by identification with something less than the self, as e.g. the body. At the higher levels a karma yogi engages in action for reasons other than egoistic gratification and personal liking and disliking, and thus attains liberation. But how does a man

who is still engrossed at the lower levels of identification reach this plane? How does karma yoga map the path or is it meant only for those who have through bhakti or jñāna or rāja yoga etc., already crossed the deceptive allurements of a finite ego?

While it is non-ego centered action that has the potential to release, and karma yoga points to it as the way, it also recognises the need to map the path to help a sādḥaka come to this stage. The higher stage has been described as that of niskāma karma, while the lower preparatory stage in which it is sought to progressively eliminate the ego-centred impulses through a guided satisfaction and expression of them is described as stage of sakāma karma.

Except very few highly evolved souls who are born with discrimination and detachment from the pleasures of the body-mind (kāma and artha), most human beings naturally, have a sense of identity with the body-mind and a sort of innate attraction for kāma and artha which develops into strong desires for the objects of sense enjoyment and name, fame, success, money and other instruments of ego-satisfaction.

Based on a recognition of this fact, the path of karma yoga lies through an active but guided, sound pursuit of these desires\* - so that through a legitimate and alert

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\* Sakāma karma also falls within karma yoga depending on the stage of the sādḥaka. See below "Moral and Aesthetic Value- Indian & Western Approach", pp.

engagement in these affairs, the individual may realise through personal experience, the true worth of these pursuits. A successful life of action is required for this. The first steps of karma yoga emphasise the principles and methods which are the same as normally recommended for success.

(1) Thus at the very outset, karma yoga addresses itself to the man who has desires and wishes, but who spends most of his time in wishful thinking and day-dreaming rather than doing appropriate actions for the attainment of the desired objects. To such a person karma yoga says: 'Arise, stand up, work and through work attain what you desire'. The Upaniṣads (Iśa e.g.) the Gīta, the dharmasāstras all lay emphasis on the need to work.\* Laziness, inertia, waste of energy in sloth and painless frittering are the signs of tamas which is the binding agent of prakṛiti at the lowest levels. The very first step is to vanquish these and live an active, energetic life.

(2) As the person learns to work with energy and enthusiasm, he soon realizes that he needs some discipline, concentration, a gathering of his energies to forge ahead and make the best use of them. So the next step is to learn to direct, harness, gather one's energies by reference to purposes and goals.

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Actions should be goal - directed. Further, one should make a judicious choice amongst goals also. In the light of one's capacities and abilities, aptitudes and stage, one should set a goal for himself and discipline one's life for its achievement. If the goal is too far above one's present ability, it will cause excessive tension, irritation and frustration. But also if it is easy to reach, there will be no sense of challenge and it will not draw the best out of an individual. In a similar way, for too distant a goal is too remote and fails to inspire, a task one can achieve in a short time cannot serve the purpose of the long range goal. The best way is to set up proximate goals as steps to a long range achievement. The dynamism that a well chosen appropriate goal releases may surprise the person himself.

When a person has mastered the art of working efficiently, organising his energies and his time by reference to well chosen goals, he has moved far ahead of the earlier stage of inertia, laziness and purposeless living. This new discipline and dedication to work, is likely to crown his efforts with success, so that he will experience the pleasure of fulfillment of his worldly desires. The next step takes him to a consideration and care for norms, values, laws, dharma in the worldly pursuit. He knows success, but if he has been pursuing it in violation of dharma, the ethical/social laws, he would have felt that the cost is too much. The binding,



the insecurity, the fear, the guilt feeling, the rationalizations and the like which accompany dishonest pursuits take a heavy toll. He may also feel that a mindless pursuit of desire has led him into the deeper and deeper morass. Karma yoga insists, therefore, that kāma and artha must be pursued in the guidance of dharma. Only when so sought may they be considered to be puruṣārthas, legitimate goals of life. And only as puruṣārthas have they the capacity to lead man to the path of release.

This is where sakāma karma yoga culminates. An active, vigorous, wise, goal directed, efficient, dynamic pursuit of desire as sanctioned by dharma or the law. Sakāma karma serves its function by helping the individual discipline and develop his self and provide him with experience of desire-life in a socially and ethically acceptable manner. Finding that even a vigorous, honest, useful existence does not solve his fundamental problem and does not unite him with life eternal, becoming aware through concrete experience of the futility of desire and binding nature of egoistic involvement, he seeks to reduce and eliminate personal desire and egoistic involvement from his works. Thus he enters the realm of niskāma karma which means actions done from motives other than one's own sensual or egoistic gratification.

(i) Sensual or materialistic gratification may be replaced by a sense of duty ( ) as the motivation for work.

Not for my pleasure or gain, but because it is my duty, my obligation to do so and so, and so I must do it. Here as in the case of other forms of niṣkāma karma, all the care and attention is given to perform the work in the best possible manner. In fact a niṣkāma kartā does the works with greater efficiency than a sakāma kartā as we shall see below.

(ii) पर-स्वार्थ लोकाहित, लोकसंग्रह; The actions are undertaken so that the society or humanity at large may be served, may benefit. To serve, or to do good to others, he engage in works.

(iii) The purpose of dutiful actions, or service, or benevolence actions is, in niṣkāma karma, not personal fame, appreciation from others, but , purification of mind. Purpose could also be service of God, or ultimate freedom, or Self-Realization.

(iv) With further thinning of ego, the sense of doership may completely disappear. To a jñāni all may be only a play of gunas of prakṛiti the puruṣa or Self being only a witness; whereas to a bhakta the Lord alone is the doer, His Will prevails, all else are mere instruments in His hands.

### Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam

The nature of karma - yoga and its advantages for the seeker of ultimate freedom, and in respect of greater effectiveness in action is brought to a finer appreciation and focus in considering the idea of Kaushalam, skill in action. The Gīta says, 'Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam', yoga is skill or excellence in action. Kaushal refers to skill, expertise, the art of doing something in an effective manner with efficiency and wisdom. In a sort of gross sense, it points to the fact that karma yoga is the art of working so that our work produces the best results. The karma yogi is a more efficient worker, and produces better results on the usual conventional criterion as we shall see below, but that is not the most important sense. More important is the subtler and finer skill by which the individual cuts asunder the chords of his bondage and does not allow new sources of bondage to arise. That this can be achieved through non-egoistic action is the distinctive contribution of karma yoga. The individual personality is a structure of samskāras, residual impressions of old ego-centred thoughts, emotions and actions. These samskāras born out of rāga and dveṣha, bring into being an ego which is wound up so to say with tendencies to act and think in a characteristic manner, or (if you say that rāga, dveṣa entail an already existing ego), further solidify the old and create new

tendencies. The webs of these samskāras whittle the Original, large hearted innocence, the flexibility, the freshness, the free flow of the Self, of 'The Uncarved Block', the undifferentiated dark, vague something which is not a thing; and superimpose upon it a definite something, a thing finite and narrow, and covers with its shadow the boundless energy and joy of the Original, Self. As long as the individual continues to act from a consciousness which is steeped in raga & dveṣa, taking pleasure and avoiding pain, this superimposed structure of the ego gets thicker and thicker. And yet as the fact of the ego with its samskāras is already the given, action is necessary, for they call for their exhaustion through action. It is like a robot which has been programmed to act in certain directions and cannot stay in peace without such actions. So man must act, indeed, he cannot stay without some action. But if while engaging in these actions through which they may thus work themselves out, by taking pleasure or pain in them he creates further seeds of rāga and dveṣa, the vicious cycle will go on. On the other hand by removing egoistic involvement and selfish desire from the scene (as his motives etc.), he will achieve what is desired — exhaustion of old samskāras which bind, narrow, limit and debilitate and non-creation of the new ones. This is skill, kaushalam, in the highest sense.

But now turning our attention to kaushalam in the so to say lower, conventional sense of greater efficiency in

action, the nishkāma karma yogi attains that also in a greater and superior measure.

- (1) Egoistic involvement and selfish desire produce a great amount of attachment to the results of the action and as such give rise to a great deal of anxiety, fear, insecurity, worry etc. which drain a lot of man's energy and create mental tensions which adversely effect the quality of work. Working for non-egoistic motives, the karma yogi remains free from these and has greater physical and psychological energies available to him. Unlike the ordinary man, he carries no burden of action. He does his best and having done it, is not bogged down in expectations, hopes fears and worries about the outcome.
- (2) The man who ever looks over his shoulders so to say to calculate selfish gain, goes through hope and despair, exultation and gloom depending on the outcome for personal gain, and so his work also suffers from these fluctuations. Rather than working in a steady and sustained manner he works in fits and starts which is a great drawback. The karma yogi, on the other hand, suffers from no such disadvantage, his inspiration for work does not depend on external conditions which are beyonds his control; and inspired by a sense of duty, or service of fellow human beings or God, depending

not on the reactions of others or presence or absence of external situations, he continues to work.

- (3) The sakāma agent may then be said to suffer from a paradox comparable to the paradox of happiness - i.e. the pursuer of happiness often misses it. The fruits of actions elude the fruit-seeker. His attention too much on the fruit which distracts from work, but the potency for bringing in the fruits lies in work and not in desiring. The causal relation exists between actions and not mere wishing and consequences. Willing and firm resolve which translate in action may be regarded as necessary constituents of fulfilment of desires. One who has a firm resolve and has his attention fixed on work, action, its appropriateness will get better results than the result seeker.

Consideration of fruit weighs heavy in the mind of a sakāma karmi and produce chains of thoughts and emotion which makes full absorption in the work almost impossible. The nishkama karmi has a free mind, a mind empty of such personal worries and anxieties and it gets absorbed in the work at hand. He gains talleenata with work being one with the work he learns its many fine points. The work itself leads him, shows him different directions. Such an absorption is conducive to generation of original ideas, important discoveries, creativity. There is no

comparison between the quality of work produced in such conditions and that which is marred by egoistic concerns and forced concentration.

Further, through a total absorption in work, he also tastes the bliss of samādhi, for the ego having been submerged the innate bliss of the self prevails.

- (4) What kind of person does sakam karma make in contrast to nishkama karma. Acting on egoistic motives, the sakāma agent is always weighs profit and loss that accrue to his limited small self. Thus his actions further solidify his self-oriented attitude. Unless he informs his actions by a spirit of karma yoga, appropriate to his stage, he finds himself on a downward path, increasingly becoming a more self-centred and calculating person. There is something demeaning and non-noble about such a personality. Thus we see many people increasingly losing noble, large, generous, loving traits of their self and growing into mean & petty old people. The insistent demands of egoistic calculations, and a continuous engagement with them over a long period of time take a heavy toll of the noble elements in personality turning the self into a hard, shrivelled, lonesome, loveless thing, a prisoner of its own petty narrow concerns.

In brief: The greatest benefits of karma yoga are reaped at the stage of nishkama karma. That is where the individual reaps true gain, the exhaustion of old saṃskāras and vāsanās and blocking the arising of new ones - thus opening a path for unwinding and true freedom. He does gain greater efficacy in the grosser, conventional sense also, as he is lighter, his mind is more peaceful and calm, less distracted by wasteful emotions and pointless distractions, he is able to apply his energies in a concerted and dynamic way, inwardly he is free of anxiety, worry, fear and is full of a calm and serene joy. That is the true stage of karma yoga.

If a person aspires to banish egoistic motives and act from non-egoistic motives, karma yoga shows him the way - to gradually replace egoistic motives by duty, altruism, service of God and so on. For a person who does not even look upto nishkama stage, but is fully engrossed in the desire life, karma yoga provides help and guidance, by regulating his pursuit with dharma.

The dharmic pursuit is better,

- (a) it makes room for all the members pursuing their respective goals with minimal conflict and mutual destruction.
- (b) Pursuing desire in socially and morally sanctioned ways provides greater peace, confidence, fearlessness and dignity.



(c) By emphasizing work, and at the same time the virtues of tapa, contentment, faith in the cosmic order, law of karma, perseverance, forgiveness, truth, etc, it cuts down pointless fretting and fuming, irritability, aggression, arrogance and anger. These are of great help in preservation of energies and their use for greater effectiveness in work, and most of all for cultivation of a vigorous and yet cheerfully serene & calm disposition.

And of course at the still lower stages of a person's development, karma yoga provides appropriate guidance by pulling him out of inert and merely wishful existence, to an active purposeful life. Thus it has relevance and usefulness for the entire spectrum - from the stage of inert tamas to transcendence of the sattuka and even the very sense of ego.

## III

What exactly is the art of living - the method of karma yoga the technique, the wisdom by which a person works out his past samskāras without creating new ones? In order to answer this question properly, we have to take a close look at the nature of samskāras, their role in the personality structure and the relationship between bondage and pleasure and pain, rāga and dvesha.\*

The personality structure, a complex of habits, dispositions with pain & pleasure, rāga and dvesha limits the boundless knowledge and freedom of the Self and narrows its knowledge and action through the mechanism of superimposing a small, well-defined, concrete, a definite something on the essentially boundless Creativity. How is this 'definite', a 'thing' formed? It would be tempting to say that rāga and dvesha themselves bring it about, by a liking for pleasure and things pleasant and disliking for pain and things painful. But the problem is can we make sense of pleasure & pain, rāga and dvesha without reference to an experiencing ego? I think not. On the other hand if the ego comes first and rāga & dvesha later then the question is what is in the ego which leads to rāga and dvesha? In any case, we need not speculate on this issue; let us take as our point of departure the given fact of many egos with their attachments and aversions. We see them invariably together.

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\* The remaining part of this section has been used below in "Moral and Aesthetic Value-Indian & Western Approach".

So the given fact is the experiencing suffering ego with its set of attachment/aversion and tendencies and pre-dispositions, Samskāras. The previously gathered samskāras impell him to seek certain sorts of situations and do certain kinds of actions. Vāsanās are part of his samskāras. Due to the effect of these samskāras, he finds himself in certain kinds of situations. In experiencing these situations and working under their influence unself-consciously, the individual confronts many bitter-sweet experiences. The situations contain their share of agreeable and disagreeable moments. A vāsanā seeks its exhaustion through engagement in certain kinds of actions. If the person acts impelled by vāsanās he can hardly be expected to take a neutral stand - so the bitter sweet taste. Now, in experiencing pain and pleasure, bitter and sweet fruit, does the person give rise to new samskāras of rāga and dvesha, new vāsanās, new causes for pleasure and pain? If he does so, as is the case with most people, he creates new bondage for himself. But going through the bitter sweet situations with equanimity, without rāga and dvesha for them he walks the path that will eventually take him to freedom.

This advice may be all right for the enlightened ones or these who have transcended the ego and are disengaged from rāga and dvesha. But a sakāma karmi is by definition one who works for the sake of a vāsanā — how then can he be emotionally neutral to them? And if he is not so emotionally

neutral, will he not continue to generate further rāga and dvesha and bondage? But the path is needed precisely for those with vāsanās! This requires further analysis.

The egoistic structure with its rāga- dveṣa, predispositions saṃskāras — which narrow and limit his consciousness, make him the kind of person he is, more a blind and willing slave of his saṃskāras than someone who is conscious of their existence and their hold on his present thoughts, emotions and actions. The saṃskāras have given him a human body, parents, society, nation etc., and his association with each of these gives him certain needs, dispositions, likes and dislikes. These include bodily needs psychological and social urges of various kinds. As a carrier of these desires and dispositions he interacts with the environment and judges the objects/events as friends or enemies, and develops rāga or dvesha towards them. In this way this personality structure continues to grow assimilating the events and his interactions in his characteristic way to continue the development of his self in his not necessarily, in fact rarely, chosen, but nevertheless characteristic manner. This is the given normal human being. The vibrating entity, constituted by his dispositions, drives, needs, urges, memories, associations, thought emotions and so on is the individual ego, constantly in contact with the world, constantly reacting to the stimuli emotionally and working, acting, accordingly. The most pervasive and basic of the emotional reactions are pleasure

and pain, with attachment for pleasure and aversion for pain. The emotional response of pleasure and pain or indifference, consequent judgment of events as 'good', 'bad' or neutral, and seeking or avoiding of behaviour accordingly, are to a lesser or greater degree pervasively characteristics of man's life. This way of being is natural to man, naisargika without anybody's doing anythings, the cycle of this becoming keeps moving. It is clear that this mode of being only nourishes the Banyan of ego, solidifies the egoistic pattern more and more - taking him further away from mukti, true freedom.

So what elements should one inject into this mode of becoming so that the samsriti this ever moving, on-going process may be slowed down and eventually stopped?

The answer will depend on the stage of the sādḥaka. Let us take the case where he becomes aware of the force of desires in himself, but is still enamoured with them. He has certain vāsanās. The vāsanās urge him to certain kinds of actions, he finds that he cannot suppress this force of the vāsanās, it is too strong to resist. In such a situation he engages in appropriate action and allows this force to find a channel in action and spend self. With a lot of energy caught up in the vāsanā having been released in action dictated by it, there is a cathartic effect, the vāsanā is weakened and the careful sādḥaka, at this point of its weakness is able to detach the mind from it. Having arisen, and finding

expression the vāsanās and saṃskāras weaken and exhaust themselves, provided there is a proper attitude on the part of the sādḥaka. If he allows a further deepening of egoistic involvement, rāga - dveṣa will be further created and he will keep going around and around. The old saṃskāras exhaust themselves but as in the case of raktabīja, new ones sprout. (You cannot cut & wound a raktabīja the blood will give rise to many more, you must suffocate it to death). An attitude of calm detachment, without reaction of rāga and dveṣa; that is what is required. This is obviously very difficult in the case of sakāma karma. For when desire is the motivating force of an action, rāga, dveṣa, and other characteristics of desire life - worry, anxiety, etc. will also follow - and these would, of course, create further saṃskāras and vāsanās - they would only strengthen and thicken the egoistic structure that binds. In the case of nishkāma karma, however, it is feasible. For here the motivation is not provided by personal, egoistic desire, but consideration of duty, welfare of others, service of humanity, love devotion to God etc. Doing actions with these motivations, he can with care and alertness avoid rāga dveṣa and eventually even a sense of his having done it. Thus he allows the past saṃskāras to get exhausted and creates no new ones. In due time he will be free of all saṃskāras and be free.

But this raises two questions: One about nishkāma karma and One about the sakāma, both important.

First about nishkāma : Engaged in non-egoistic action, the karma yogi exhausts his old saṃskāras. The question is does non-egoistic action exhaust saṃskāras of egoistic acquisition, that is saṃskāras which normally would involve him in ego-centred actions? Only if this is so, would karma yoga, nishkāma karma be a path for the sādhanas, and not just a natural way of being for the realized souls. The sādhanas have to find a way for burning their ego-centred desires. If the sakāma karma does not competently deal with egoistic desires: it creates further saṃskāras & so bondage, and if nishkāma karma is meant only for those who have already transcended all desires, then karma yoga would not be a path - for it would have nothing to say to those to whom alone a 'path' is relevant: the sādhanas: who have desires, but wish to go beyond it to the realm of freedom.

This problem may be solved thus: at the nishkāma stage: the person has egoistic desires, but wishes to cross them. There is a lot of his energy caught up in these, yet unworked out vāsanās. If he undertakes action to fulfil them, he creates further chains due to personal involvement and the consequent rāga, dvesha worry etc. So by doing action from non-egoistic motives he finds a harmless and constructive expression for his energies. Thus he withdraws his vital energies from desire thoughts, disallows actions in the service of desires, and thus starves them out, suffocates them

to death. When no actions and no thoughts & feelings arise, the desire samskāras are stimulated: but as they find no food, no encouragement (because they are watched but nothing is done as per their demands), they become weak and subside. When this happens again and again, the desire-self dies and with that the sādḥaka ego also. The sādḥaka-ego is needed as long as there are desires to deal with them in a constructive and helpful manner.

This applies to the aspirants who are aware of the pitfalls of desire life and are yet not free from its clutches. But what has karma yoga to say to those who are still enamoured with desires and wish to perform action for their fulfilment? For them karma yoga recommends a pursuit of desires under the regulation of dharma. Pursuing desires (in socially sanctioned ways: that makes it easy for everyone to pursue their respective life styles), the individual comes to see the limitations of the desire-life through his own concrete experience. The vicious cycle of desire - more & more if satisfied, anger and restlessness when frustrated and the anxiety, fear, insecurity, worry etc. which tarnish the desire mind will eventually make him realize the limitations of this mode and the need to transcend it. And at that point he is ready for nishkāma karma.



## IV

The superiority of niṣkāma karma over sakāma has been propounded and it is convincing. But as to how to attain, how to pass on from sakāma to niṣkāma stage, the following may be said:

(a) Socrates said knowledge is virtue. If we clearly, actually see that niṣkāma karma is superior to sakāma karma, we shall spontaneously move towards niṣkāma karma. For man does wrong things and takes inferior paths believing that they are more useful & effective in bringing him happiness - and not seeing that this is a false belief. If he clearly saw that it was a false belief, he would drop it. So in that case a step has been taken - in showing the superiority of one over the other.

(b) A vigorous dhārmika pursuit of desire life for those who are engrossed in it has been recommended as such a pursuit with open eyes leads one out of the desire life. So that is another way shown.

(c) But most important step is an understanding of how in niṣkāma motives with vigorous action, lies the royal road to freedom: working out of old saṃskāras and prevention of new ones as explained above.

Here a question arises as to what extent the need and body's dependence on food, rest, sleep, water etc. may be said to block man's quest for freedom, mukti.

Can I be aware of the bodily needs in a state of equanimity, with complete neutrality, i.e. without any attachment and aversion? For suppose a man becomes aware of the body's need and does even what is required to meet it, may he not do it without even a trace of attachment (or aversion) for it? If he takes the attitude such as "Here- some contractions in the stomach, generally known as hunger; here-food, here- the eating of food; and he observes this whole process without any egoistic involvement whatsoever. Such a detachment from the body and its demands has been displayed by many saints, sādhakas and men of realization, and not only when they had to miss a meal or two, but over prolonged periods of food deprivation.

But it may be said that for a person to be able to do it over a duration of time, he has to be a realized man, one who has completely cut off any sense of identification with the body. For if hunger is not experienced as my hunger, my need, but merely as an objective fact, then it is possible for us to conceive of 'someone' going without food for long, even to death, without experiencing pangs, anger, or craving for food, i.e., without this food deprivation forcing an egoistic involvement. It is true that even ordinary human beings may become conscious of a need, and though having a strong urge to fulfil it, may inhibit, suppress it, because of some other considerations which to him are more weighty. We all know this - controlling the desire, and postponing fulfillment of

even basic needs such as food and sleep.

(a) Though a normal human being may be able to control or suppress for a while, there are limits beyond which he cannot hold it, (b) but secondly and more importantly, he feels them to be his needs and is engaged in dealing with them.

As long as he experiences them as his needs, some amount of dependence however subtle will be there, and depending on the circumstances, fear and insecurity in seed form will also remain.

It appears then that for a self-realized man, a jīvan mukta basic necessities or needs cause no problem in fact, they are not his needs at all.\* But the problem remains for the sādḥaka. How is a sādḥaka to deal with these so that the basic needs cease to be instruments of his bondage. For as we said above, the basic needs then may rob man of all freedom and turn him to a small- fearful insecure creature. It is of utmost

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\* Even in the case of the Realized man, the question arises: granted that he satisfies his basic needs without attachment, aversion, without egoistic involvement as he no more identifies himself with the body the question still is: why does he fulfil them at all? Do we assume that he has some purpose, even if it be fulfillment, carrying out of God's will, or altruism, for which he wishes his body to live? It is all right for nishkāma karma: for he wishes the body to live for non-egoistic purpose: but does it create problems for concept of a jīvanmukta? Not so if we accept as shown elsewhere, that the jīvanmukta 'keeps', takes upon a sort of ego- that of a jñāni, a bhakta, a lover, a dāsa etc. This 'as-if ego' serves the purpose of keeping the body alive and giving a certain as if definiteness to the otherwise completely undefinable life of a realized man.

importance to discuss this question in the context of the sādhanā. Does it mean we compromise after all?

If a jīvanmukta wishes to keep his body i.e., wishes it to survive, for some purpose, (may be to serve others, to save and disseminate knowledge, he feels some task is to be done, some mission, as the work of God), what happens in case he is deprived of food? If we grant that the body can survive without a trace of identification with it on the part of the person, then, the free man has no identification whatsoever and the need of the body will not be experienced as hunger. So the body will need food without the person feeling hungry. But still, the realized man may show concern at the body being starved: The difference is that in his case it is not because of hunger, not because he feels hungry therefore he is driven to find food and is concerned about it as the case with an ordinary person; but because he has a purpose which requires body's survival, for which he looks around for food.

However, it may be said that without some accepted identification with the body, the body cannot survive, the *raison d'être* for the combination of various elements physical and psychological will have disappeared. Thus even in the case of the realized man, if he stays alive, some identification with the body will have to be assumed, unless of course, he is alive merely to exhaust his *prārabdha*: in which case no identification is required and favourable or 'unfavourable'

(i.e. generally deemed to be so) situations will arise and pass on, when all the past karmas are exhausted, the body will drop.

Let us return to the sādḥaka once again where the question of basic needs assumes great importance. Given his identification with the body (it is sanātan in Indian thought) due to saṃskāras and tendencies acquired in many lives, the sādḥak experiences the needs of the body as his needs and experiences pleasure or pain, satisfaction or suffering depending on whether they are fulfilled or frustrated. This would then constitute a serious source of bondage, since these needs are unavoidable. They have a certain periodicity about them: food: twice a day, sleep every 15 or, 16, 17 hours, thirst much more frequent and so on. Now the amount and the interval may be increased or decreased, and as some cases show to an extent that one normally considers impossible: from eating thrice a day to once a day or once in seven days, from eight hours of sleep to 2 hours etc. But they cannot except in some very very extreme cases completely be eliminated. Further, unless this kind of exercise is done voluntarily, and often even then, a delayed satisfaction of basic needs may produce a strong desire, a craving for the objects related to needs.

Further, in relationship to desire, while I may be able to drop a desire completely, after once or twice satisfying it,

or due to frustration, or due to better understanding and analysis, the same is not true of needs. And further, centering around needs there may be desires, and between such needs need-centred desires we ought to distinguish: as we can eliminate need-oriented desires even if not the needs; even though because of a confusion between the two, it may be assumed or believed that need-oriented desires cannot be eliminated. That, of course, is false. Needs are conditions of life, our very survival and efficient functioning of the body depends on them, unless men attain a detachment from body, their non-satisfaction may produce severe suffering, disturbs the balance and pre-occupys one's time and energy in a excessively large amount. Thus a secure and steady means of taking care of them is a necessary condition of a good life, as well as for sādhanā. That is why the Gita also recommends

Yuktāhāraviharasya yukta ceshtasya karmsu  
yukta swapnāva bodhasya yogo bhavati dukhahā.

Buddha also recommends the middle way.. As conditions of very survival, their satisfaction may be considered to be neutral, and compatible with any philosophy of life & goals. Whether it is a sādhanika who wants to eliminate desire and attain mokṣa, or whether a materialist wanting to attain power & wealth, both must take care to keep the body alive and functioning harmoniously. The point of objection, of course, is that while the need to reasonable arrangements for a secure satisfaction of bodily needs create no dissonance in a life

of desire, it does so in the case of a mumukṣu, since he aims to be free from all desires & needs. We may now answer this adequately by saying that while the sādhak aims at attaining complete freedom by eliminating all desires, this is done in stages alone, in harmony with levels of his evolution. For example the goal, the objective, even intense desire to be free from all limitations is a desire or a meta-desire which remains and is not only not an obstruction but is in fact a great aid during the sādhanā time. Only when other desires have been thrown out with its help, is the time appropriate for its dismissal also. In fact at that stage, it will itself drop.

Similarly in the sādhanā stage, satsang, seeking out mahātmās and realized r̥n and following the discipline prescribed, seeking out favourable environment etc. are in order.

So, if taking care of bodily needs is also recognised as one such factor, where is the problem? As one is recommended to seek spiritual food so also one is enjoined to make proper arrangements for physical food etc. until he realizes the truth. Once the true nature of Self as distinct from the body is realized all desires and needs including the biological, satsang, and desire to be desireless drop.

At this point one more question arises. Bondage is caused by saṃskāras, there being saṃskāras bondage follows.

Samskāras mean, those of liking and disliking, rāga and dveṣa. Whenever a person acts from desire, any desire - primary or meta, or even need - he will make samskāras. Anything leading to its satisfaction will produce rāga and the opposite dveṣa. This is certainly true of need - oriented desires also: 'good' food, tasty food, cushions bed etc.

Even if it were a matter of bare need, bereft of taste considerations - which of course raises its samskāra potential manifold - there being identification with the body, rāga and dveṣa will follow. So the situation is like this the sādḥaka cannot but have some desires during his sādhanā time, desires produce samskāras which produce bondage. How can a sādḥaka then ever hope to be free?

In the case of desires as distinct from needs the problem may not pose any seriousness. Desires are found in man's life, but they are not inevitable they may be removed. Thus their existence does not pose any logical problem for the possibility of realization. But the problem is acute in the case of needs, for needs have been regarded as essential, unavoidable. As conditions of life they are conditions of a sādḥaka's life also. Now if they necessarily imply aversion/attachment, then aversion/attachment would also become necessary elements of life. And since mokṣa requires elimination of aversion/attachment, mokṣa would become unattainable.



The breaking of this chain at need — aversion/attachment is not fully possible as there is identification with the body. Which makes them felt as 'my needs', and a/a will arise from their satisfaction or frustration. With ego involved in them, some seeds of a/a however subtle are bound to be there.

Needs → a/a → non-mokṣa.

Needs are invariable in a sādḥaka's life

a/a is incompatible with mokṣa

Needs must produce a/a at the sādḥaka's stage because of an identification with the body.

Hence the problem.

A complete disassociation with the body perhaps requires full realization, and full realization requires complete dissociation, but there are and we observe degrees of identification and a/a in sādḥakas. With proper understanding and practice, a sādḥaka can reduce his body identification and ego sense, this makes possible further, higher stages of understanding and knowledge, while in turn make possible further dissociation with the body, which facilitates further stages of realization and so on. Mutually supporting each other as they are realization, and its effect in life, (less identification, less a/a), the sādḥaka makes rapid progress until a total dissociation with the body, complete eradication of a/a, full realization obtains.

Or one may say that dissociation with the body and realization are not two different things, but one & the same. So the problem as raised is an artificial one, body identification gives rise to a/a, and the sādḥaka practises, trains to increasingly reduce both identification with body and a/a. That is the meaning of sādhanā.

The problem may be posed in a somewhat different terminology, or it may be considered to be an allied problem. The sādḥaka has to burn his karmas: especially his prārabdha, for it is maintained that prārabdha cannot be averted, even though the effect of sanchita may be averted, and of course, one can change the quality of the kriyamāna, from sakāma to niṣkāma, so that they do not bind any more, do not produce any saṃskāras. The prārabdha brings in sādḥaka's life favourable or unfavourable conditions and situations; wealth or its opposite, success or failure, disease or good health etc. The sādḥaka has to exhaust their effects by going through these situations. Having identification with the body, while going through these adverse or favourable situations, he will experience pleasure or pain; rāga and dveṣa. While the old saṃskāras are being exhausted, new ones are being created. And, of course, if he further acts guided by these rāga and dveṣa, he produces even more saṃskāras. This part he can take care of, as we maintained above, by enduring, suffering, by not acting on the urges produced by the old saṃskāras but

by realising the energy caught up in them in niṣkāma actions. But the question here is of saṃskāras that are produced in the very experience of favourable or averse situations. Of course there will be no saṃskāras if while experiencing them no rāga & dveṣa are allowed to arise. But that seems to have been ruled out by the fact of identification with the body. What then is the solution?

The answer may be attempted thus: The sādḥaka makes progress in attaining detachment from the body. So while the living out of prārabdha produces further saṃskāras, increasingly in proportion to the weakening of body identification and progress in sādhanā - they are of a weaker and lighter quality. His saṃskāras becoming weaker and his sādhanā stronger, a time comes when his mind is purified he attains freedom, and if some prārabdha is left, it gets exhausted in due time. That a free man may yet have to live to work out his prārabdha shows that the realisation of the true nature of self is not dependent on exhaustion of all saṃskāras. If that were so, freedom would be impossible.

The answer to the earlier question about desires is also similar.

The sattvik desire to be desireless, or for satsang etc. cuts out other- desires, reduces them. Due to satsang and

mumukṣattva, the sādḥaka withdraws his mind from many objects and pursuits in which it was involved earlier and thereby drops many desires. Sāttvika desires create saṃskāras, but they are helpful saṃskāras, and helpful saṃskāras are all right as long as there are bad, obstructing saṃskāras. Once the bad saṃskāras have been eliminated, the good ones may also be dropped and total freedom attained.

But what about saṃskāras associated with basic needs? One cannot say that they are helpful, for they arise due to one's identification with the body. Well, they may be taken to be a constant reminder to the sādḥaka that a lot yet remains to be achieved namely a cessation of the body-sense. And by practising to remain equanimous, undisturbed by the demands of the body, the sādḥaka trains to actually (not only in thought) wrest away association with the body, and secondly he increasingly weakens the formation of saṃskāras. In other words, by learning to minimise, voluntarily delay and control the demands of bodily needs, he puts into practice detachment from body and thus makes progress in the path. So the answer is, saṃskāras are made by bodily needs, but increasingly less and less, until the process comes to a virtual halt.

## V

Q. It has been said that niskama karma implies eradication of desire, can there be action without desire?

Ans. We have already clarified that kāma is to be understood to mean desires for sense pleasures and wealth, power, status etc. (i.e. a desires included under kāma and artha). That leaves dharma and mokṣa. Actions done from motivations of dharma, it is my duty, obligation, and for mokṣa, as well as for the welfare of others, love of God etc. are actions with reasons, motives but not those which are included under kāma. So they are niskāma.

Q. So, actions done from non-egoistic motives are all right as they do not bind. But what about the desire to be desireless? Is that not a desire which will bind?

Ans. Not so. Let us designate desire to be desireless as  $D_2$ , while ordinary desires which depend for their satisfaction on acquisition of objects or states of affairs outside oneself may be designated by  $D_1$ . Such desires are the ones e.g. for money, sense- pleasures objects of sense - delight, status, success, name and fame etc. So we see that even though we describe both by the word desire. Yet their characteristics are fundamentally different. Now  $D_2$  is not fit to be included in the category of  $D_1$ . Hence it may legitimately be kept & worked upon by a sādhaka, a karma-yogi.

Let us see it a little more closely.  $D_2$  is parasitic on  $D_1$ . As long as a person has  $D_1$ s, he may, indeed he should have  $D_2$ , otherwise he will remain caught in the play of  $D_1$ s. On the other hand if no  $D_1$ s exist, there will be no  $D_2$ , it will by itself drop. So what is the problem?  $D_2$  does not bind, but in fact helps to cut out  $D_1$ s which do bind, so it is needed when  $D_1$ s are there. And when no  $D_1$ s exist, it itself exists no more. So how does it bind? In other words a sādhak may without any inconsistency desire to be desireless.

Q. What about survival oriented desires, desires which arise from basic needs or requirements of man — the biological needs as e.g. the need for food, sleep, water, sex and others? Are these not egoistic desires, and yet, does not every human being including a karma yogi have them, rather must he not? Can he help having them? If that is so, how can anyone be a full karma-yogi? An unadulterated karma yogi, so to say?

Ans. I shall add that if he cannot avoid having some egoistic desires, they may bar attainment of full freedom, for in respect of these, through these all the fears, anxieties and worries may sneak in. I think that even if a few such desires must of necessity prevail, the whole prapancha will be back, all the worry and anxiety will concentrate at that point.

Therefore we must consider this carefully. First of all we must make a distinction between biological needs and requirements on the one hand and desires on the other.

Desire is a psychological concept. If I desire a thing, I wish to obtain it. I feel gratification when it is fulfilled, frustration when it is not; pleased and well disposed to those who help in its fulfillment, angry and ill disposed towards these who obstruct.

But that is not so with regard to needs or requirements. It may be medically determined that I need such and such vitamin, calcium or salts etc., but I may have no awareness that I need so & so, nor may I particularly like or desire or have any inclination to take what the doctor decides I need to. Also I desire many things which I do not need; e.g. cigarettes, alcohol, much sugar & so on or which in fact may be harmful to me. Thus what I biologically, medically need, may have little correlation with what I desire.

One may make a distinction here between medically determined needs and biological needs or basic necessities and insist that even though there may not be a correlation between desires and the former, yet there appears to exist one between basic necessities and desires. One may further hold that even if it is shown that there is no necessary connection between biological needs and desires, yet it may be that the basic necessities impose a compulsion on man, on every human

being, and that is in fact even worse than having a desire as for as the question of freedom or mokṣa is concerned.

Basic necessities (for food e.g.)



Felt basic needs (hunger)



Gives rise to psychological need, i.e. desire?

basic necessities

Must/lead to desire i.e. psychological need to fulfil it?

Or is it a contingent connection between felt need (hunger) and desire for food, craving and attachment for food?

If it is a contingent connection, the basic need may be felt and fulfilled without any psychological involvement, attachment/aversion, fear or hope. So, room is made for satisfaction of basic needs without making it detrimental to mokṣa.

Q. How is one to proceed from sakāma to niṣkāma stage?

Ans. We have already dealt with this question above. Here we shall recapitulate the main points in brief. The three stages of sādhakas have been talked about earlier.

The Tāmasika, Rājasika & Sāttvika.

For Mandakāma, tāmasic person, the way lies in development of interest in and active engagement in work. For the rājasika, the way is to purify his motives and bring his kāma and artha activities under the regulation of dharma. So first, let a person drop his inertia and sloth. This is normally done by a ambition, love of success,



money, pleasure etc. This question arises at this stage: a normal sakāma worker somewhat dissatisfied with sakāma actions and having heard about the benefits of nishkāma actions wishes to drop the former and adopt the latter mode of life. How may he make this transition?

1. A clear understanding, analysis, backed by reflection on sakāma life showing its limitations and inadequacies, and inability to meet the true needs of man, life eternal and joy undiminished: thinking and reflecting, he develops a 'Dukha-buddhi' in, a disillusionment of desire life, this is a precondition of such a transition. Indeed, it has been said that if this disillusionment (vairagya) is intense, this intensity itself will bring the desire motives to an end: and the sādhak will act on non-egoistic motives. In any case some degree of this disillusionment (Dukha- buddhi) the sādhak must develop.
2. If one cannot drop some desires, and still has some fascination for them, let him go through their pursuit, but under the control & regulation of Dharma. Dhārmika pursuit gives him the (Bhoga) experience of these desires and makes it possible for him to drop them. Dharmika pursuit helps in ripening the fruit of bhoga which he drops painlessly.
3. The sādhakā should practise Vichāra and inquiring into 'who am I', sees and confirms detachment from the body.

All desires for pleasure etc. are rooted in identification with the body, weakening of this will by itself loosen the hold of desires on mind and lead to non-egoistic actions.

4. Thinking over the miseries of life, and the awful present state, one should awaken and sustain the desire for mokṣa and with its help decrease and eliminate worldly desires.
5. Disciplining oneself to undertake works from a sense of duty or moral, social obligation helps in shifting the motives from egoistic to non-egoistic ones.
6. Examining one's life carefully, one should move from tamas to rajas, and from rajas to sattva and develop one's personality to lead a vigorous, active life of pursuit of worldly goods in sanctioned ways and from there move to a stage beyond the guṇas.

Developing a sense of helping and serving others, also helps in this transition. One may begin with doing small acts which do not interfere with his own worldly good or does it to a small degree and taste the joys of doing something for others.

In brief, with sādḥaka life one transcends the worldly life. The sādḥaka life culminates in siddhi, attainment of

the highest good, thus the desires and aspirations fit for a sādḥaka's life help in eliminating the desires and cravings of the egoistic life. With the elimination of those, sādḥana attains its end and enables one to live a life of complete freedom from all desires full of joy and goodness eternal.

## Chapter Four

### RĀJA YOGA

Rāja yoga is an ancient path of emancipation and freedom. Through an acute understanding, control and transcendence of the gross as well as subtle aspects of the human personality, it offers to the sādḥaka power, bliss and knowledge of higher states of consciousness - and these are of such a different magnitude that they are practically inconceivable for the mind which functions at the ordinary level of consciousness. Rāja yoga has been of the seekers' concern in India since ancient times, and has in recent times evoked considerable interest in other countries too.

Patanjali's ashtanga yoga codified in the Yoga-sūtras gives a condensed but systematic and comprehensive treatment of the goals, methods and techniques as well as the basic theoretical foundations of Rāja yoga. I have thought it best to introduce this subject through a selection of Patanjali's sūtras. For considerations of space, however, only thirteen sutras have been taken. I have found Taimni's commentary (The Science of Yoga, Adyar) to be admirably suitable for our purposes, and have used selections from the same. The first two sutras give a general overview of the nature and scope of Yoga while the rest concern the eight limbs of Patanjali's yoga which is known as ashtānga yoga (the eight-limbed yoga). For each limb barely one sutra,

the most essential one has been selected except samādhi for which I have taken three. This is because samādhi may be considered to be the highest, most essential part of yoga. Even so what follows can barely form even a rudimentary sketch, however, if it serves to whet the interest of the reader for further studies and probes into the mysteries of consciousness and man's quest for freedom ultimate and bliss ineffable, it would have more than served its purpose.

### General

I.1

Atha Yogānusāsanam.

Now, an exposition of yoga (is to be made).

Generally, a treatise of this nature in Saṃskṛta begins with a Sūtra which gives an idea with regard to the nature of the undertaking. The present treatise is an 'exposition' of yoga. The author does not claim to be the discoverer of this science but merely an expounder who has tried to condense in a few Sūtras all the essential knowledge concerning the science which a student or aspirant ought to possess. Very little is known about Patanjali. Although we have no information about him which can be called definitely historical, still according to occult tradition he was the same person who was known as Govinda Yogi and who initiated Saṃkarācārya in the science of yoga. From the masterly manner in which

he has expounded the subject of yoga in the yoga-sutras it is obvious that he was a yogi of a very high order who had personal knowledge of all aspects of yoga including its practical technique.

The word Sūtram in Samskr̥ta means a thread and this primary meaning has given rise to the secondary meaning of Sūtram as an aphorism. Just as a thread binds together a number of beads in a rosary, in the same way the underlying continuity of idea binds together in outline the essential aspects of a subject. The most important characteristics of this method are utmost condensation consistent with clear exposition of all essential aspects and continuity of the underlying theme in spite of the apparent discontinuity of the ideas presented. The latter characteristic is worth noting because the effort to discover the hidden 'thread' of reasoning beneath the apparently unconnected ideas very often provides the clue to the meaning of many Sūtras. It should be remembered that this method of exposition was prevalent at a time when printing was unknown and most of the important treatises had to be memorized by the student. Hence the necessity of condensation to the utmost limit. Nothing essential was, of course, left out but everything with which the student was expected to be familiar or which he could easily infer from the context was ruthlessly cut out.

Those who wrote these treatises were master-minds, masters of the subject and language they dealt with. There could be no fault in their method of presentation. But in the course of time fundamental changes can sometimes be brought about in the meaning of words and the thought patterns of those who study these treatises. And this fact introduces endless possibilities of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of some of the sūtras. In treatises of a purely philosophical or religious nature such a misunderstanding would perhaps not matter so much, but in one of a highly technical and practical nature like the yoga-sūtras it can lead to great complications and even to dangers of a serious nature.

Luckily for the earnest student, yoga has always been a living science in the East and it has had an unbroken succession of living experts who continually verify by their own experiments and experiences the basic truths of this science. This has helped not only to keep the traditions of yogic culture alive and pure but to maintain the meanings of the technical words used in this science in a fairly exact and clearly defined form. It is only when a science is divorced completely from its practical application that it tends to lose itself in a morass of words which have lost their meaning and relation with the actual facts.

Yoga is the inhibition of the modifications of the mind.

This is one of the most important and well-known sūtras of this treatise not because it deals with some important principle or technique of practical value but because it defines with the help of only four words the essential nature of yoga. There are certain concepts in every science which are of a basic nature and which must be understood aright if the student is to get a satisfactory grasp of the subject as a whole. The ideas underlying all the four words in this sūtra are of such a fundamental nature and the student should try to grasp through study and reflection their real meaning. Of course, the significance of these words will become sufficiently clear only when the book has been studied thoroughly, and the various aspects of the subject considered in their relation to one another. It might be expected that words of such fundamental importance will be carefully defined and such definitions inserted wherever they are needed. But in the case of the present sūtra no such definitions have been given and we can therefore conclude that the author expected the student to acquire a clear idea with regard to the import of the words from his study of the whole book. But as it is necessary for the student not to start his study with wrong or confused ideas it will perhaps be worthwhile considering at this initial stage the import of



the words and the sūtra in a general way.

Let us begin with the word yoga. The word yoga in saṃskṛta has a very large number of meanings. It is derived from the root yuj which means 'to join' and the idea of joining runs through all the meanings. What are the two things which are sought to be joined by the practice of yoga? According to the highest conceptions of Hindu philosophy of which the science of yoga is an integral part, the human soul or the jivātmā is a facet or partial expression of the Over-Soul or Paramātmā, the Divine Reality which is the source or substratum of the manifested Universe. Although in essence the two are the same and are indivisible, still, the jivātmā has become subjectively separated from Paramātmā and is destined, after going through an evolutionary cycle in the manifested Universe, to become united with Him again in consciousness. This state of unification of the two in consciousness as well as the mental process and discipline through which this union is attained are both called yoga. This conception is formulated in a different way in the sāṃkhya philosophy but on close analysis the fundamental idea will be found to be essentially the same.

Then we come to the word Gitta. This word is derived from Git or Giti (IV-34) one of the three aspects of Paramātmā called Sat-Cit-Ānanda in Vedānta. It is this aspect which is at the basis of the form side of the Universe and through which

it is created. The reflection of this aspect in the individual soul which is a microcosm is called Citta. Citta is thus that instrument or medium through which the jivātmā materializes his individual world, lives and evolves in the world until he has become perfected and united with the Paramātmā. Broadly, therefore, Citta corresponds to 'mind' of modern psychology but it has a more comprehensive import and field for functioning. While Citta may be considered as a universal medium through which consciousness functions on all the planes of the manifested Universe, the 'mind' of modern psychology is confined to the expression of only thought, volition and feeling.

We should not, however, make the mistake of imagining Citta as a sort of material medium which is moulded into different forms when mental images of different kinds are produced. It is fundamentally of the nature of consciousness which is immaterial but affected by matter. In fact, it may be called a product of both, consciousness and matter, or Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the presence of the both being necessary for its functioning. It is like an intangible screen which enables the light of consciousness to be projected in the manifested world. But the real secret of its essential nature lies buried in the origin of the manifested Universe and can be known only on attaining Enlightenment. It is true that the theory of perception

which is developed in Section IV gives some general indication with regard to the nature of Gitta but it does not say what Gitta essentially is.

The third word we have to consider in this Sūtra is Vṛtti. It is derived from the root Vṛt which means 'to exist'. So Vṛtti is a way of existing. In considering the ways in which a thing exists we may consider its modifications, states, activities or its functions. All these connotations are present in the meaning of Vṛtti but in the present context this word is best translated by the words 'modifications' or 'functionings'. Sometimes the word is translated as 'transformations'. This does not seem to be justified because in transformation the emphasis is on the change and not on the condition. The transformations of Gitta may be stopped and it may still remain in one particular modification as happens in Sabija Samādhi. As the ultimate aim of yoga is inhibition of all modifications in Nirbija Samādhi it will be seen that the word 'transformation' will not adequately express the meaning of the word Vṛtti. Besides, the word 'transformation' has to be used for the three Parināmas dealt with in the first part of Section III. Since Gitta has a functional existence and comes into being only when consciousness is affected by matter, the word 'functionings' perhaps expresses to the maximum degree the significance of Vṛtti in the present context, but the word 'modifications' is

also used generally and understood more easily and may therefore pass.

In trying to understand the nature of Citta-Vṛttis we have to guard against a few misconceptions which are sometimes prevalent among those who have not studied the subject deeply. The first thing to note is that Citta-Vṛtti is not a vibration. We have seen above that Citta is not material and therefore there can be no question of any vibration in it. Vibrations can take place only in a vehicle and these vibrations may produce a Citta-Vṛtti. The two are different though related. The second point to be noted in this connection is that a Citta-Vṛtti is not a mental image though it may be and is generally associated with mental images. The five-fold classification of Citta-Vṛttis in I-5 definitely shows this. Mental images may be of innumerable kinds but the author has classified Citta-Vṛttis under five heads only. This shows that Citta-Vṛttis have a more fundamental and comprehensive character than the mere mental images with which they are associated. This is not the place to enter into a detailed discussion of the essential nature of Citta-Vṛttis because the question involves the essential nature of Citta. But if the student studies carefully the six Sūtras (I-6-11) dealing with the five kinds of Vṛttis he will see that they are the fundamental states or types of modifications in which the mind can exist.

The author has given five types for the modifications of the lower concrete mind with which the ordinary man is familiar. But the number and nature of these different types are bound to be different in the higher realms of Citta.

The last word to be considered is Nirodha. This word is derived from the word Niruddham which means 'restrained', 'controlled', 'inhibited'. All these meanings are applicable in the different stages of Yoga. Restraint is involved in the initial stages, control in the more advanced stages and inhibition or complete suppression in the last stage. The subject of Nirodha has been dealt with in considering III-9 and the student should read carefully what is written in that connection.

If the student has understood the meaning of the four words in this Sūtra he will see that it defines in a masterly manner the essential nature of Yoga. The effectiveness of the definition lies in the fact that it covers all stages of progress through which the Yogi passes and all stages of unfoldment of consciousness which are the result of this progress. It is equally applicable to the stage of Kriyā-Yoga in which he learns the preliminary lessons, to the stages of Dhāraṇā and Dhyāna in which he brings the mind under his complete control, to the stage of Sabija Samādhi in which he has to suppress the 'seeds' of Śamprajñāta-Samādhi.

and to the last stage of Nirbīja Samādhi in which he inhibits all modifications of Gitta and passes beyond the realm of Prakṛti into the world of Reality. The full significance of the Sūtra can be understood only when the subject of Yoga has been studied thoroughly in all its aspects and so it is useless to say anything further at this stage.

I.3      Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe 'vasthānam.

Then the Seer is established in his own essential and fundamental nature.

This Sūtra points out in a general way what happens when all the modifications of the mind at all levels have been completely inhibited. The Seer is established in his svarūpa or in other words attains Self-realization. We cannot know what this state of Self-realization is as long as we are involved in the play of Cita-vṛttis. It can only be realized from within and not comprehended from without. Even the partial and superficial comprehension which we can obtain under our present limitations by means of study and reflection is possible only after we have mastered the whole theory and technique of Yoga outlined in this treatise. The higher stages of consciousness which unfold in the state of Samādhi and which are referred to in I-44 and 45 are called *Rtambharā* or truth-right-bearing. In their light the Yogi can know the

truth underlying all things in manifestation. But he can know the truth in this way of only those things which are part of Dr̥syam, the Seen, not of the Dr̥ṣṭa the Seer. For this he has to practise Nirbīja samādhi (I-51).

I.4

Vṛtti-sārūpyam itaratra.

In other states there is assimilation (of the Seer) with the modifications (of the mind).

When the Citta-Vṛttiṣ are not in the state of Nirodha and the Dr̥ṣṭā is not established in his Svarūpa he is assimilated with the particular Vṛtti which happens to occupy the field of his consciousness for the moment. A simile will perhaps help the student to understand this assimilation of consciousness with the transformation of the mind. Let him imagine a lighted electric bulb suspended in a tank full of limpid water. If the water is churned violently by some mechanical contrivance it will make all kinds of patterns in three dimensions round the bulb, these patterns being illuminated by the light from the bulb and changing from moment to moment. But what about the bulb itself? It will disappear from view, all the light emanating from it being assimilated with or lost in the surrounding water. Now, let him imagine the churning of water slowed down gradually

until the water becomes perfectly still. As the three dimensional patterns begin to subside gradually the electric bulb gradually emerges into view and when the water is quite at rest the bulb alone is seen. This simile illustrates in a rather crude way both the assimilation of the consciousness of the Puruṣa with the modification of the mind and its reversion to its own unmodified state when the mind comes to rest. The mind may come to rest either through Para-Vairāgya developed by Isvara-praṇidhāna or through the practice of samādhi the result in both cases is the same — Enlightenment — and Liberation.

### Eight Limbs of Yoga

II.29 Yama-niyamāsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-  
dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo'ṣṭāv aṅgāni.

Self-restraints, fixed observances, posture, regulation of breath, abstraction, concentration, contemplation, trance are the eight parts (of the self-discipline of Yoga).

The system of Yoga put forward by Patanjali has eight parts and is therefore called Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. Other systems which are based on a different technique naturally adopt other classifications and have therefore a different number



of Aṅgas. This Sūtra merely enumerates the eight constituent parts of this system of Yoga.

The only point which is worth considering in this Sūtra is whether the eight Aṅgas in this system are to be taken as independent parts or as stages which follow each other in natural sequence. The use of the word Aṅgas which means limbs implies that they are to be taken as related but non-sequential parts, but the manner in which Patanjali has dealt with them in the text shows that they have a certain sequential relationship. Anyone who examines carefully the nature of these parts cannot fail to see that they are related to one another in a definite manner and follow one another in a natural manner in the order in which they are given above. In systematic practice of higher Yoga, therefore, they have to be taken in the sense of stages and the order in which they are given has to be adhered to, as far as possible. But, as a Sādhaka can take up for practice any of the Aṅgas without adhering to this sequence these parts may be considered independent also to some extent.

### YAMAS

II.30 Ahimsā-satyāsteya-brahmacaryāparigrahā yamāḥ.

Vows of self-restraint comprise abstention from violence, falsehood, theft, incontinence and acquisitiveness.

Yama and Niyama the first two Aṅgas of Yoga are meant to provide an adequate moral foundation for the Yogic training. The very fact that they are placed before the other Aṅgas shows their basic character. Before dealing with the moral qualities and general mode of life which are implied in Yama-Niyama it is necessary to explain a few things about the place of morality in the Yogic life.

Incredible as it may sound, morality of a high order is not always necessary for the practice of Yoga. There are two kinds of Yoga — lower and higher. The lower has for its object the development of certain psychic faculties and supernormal powers and for this the transcendent morality implied in Yama-Niyama is not at all necessary; in fact, it acts as a hindrance because it causes inner conflict and prevents the Yogi from going ahead with his pursuit of personal power and ambitions. There are a large number of Yogis scattered throughout India, Tibet and other countries who undoubtedly possess supernormal powers and faculties but who are not distinguishable from the ordinary man of the world by any special moral or spiritual traits of character. Some of these men are good people, self-centred or vain but harmless. Others, of another class, cannot be considered innocent and harmless. They are prone to take part in questionable activities and under provocation can cause injury to those who cross their path. There is a third class of Yogis

who definitely tread the Left-hand path and are called Brothers of the Shadow. They have powers of various kinds developed to a high degree, are unscrupulous and dangerous, though outwardly they may adopt a mode of life which makes them appear religious. But anyone in whom intuition is developed can spot these people and distinguish them from the followers of the Right-hand path by their tendency to cruelty, unscrupulousness and conceit.

The higher Yoga which is expounded in the Yoga-sūtras should be distinguished very carefully from the lower Yoga referred to above. It has for its objective not the development of powers which can be used for self-aggrandizement or satisfaction of conceit but Enlightenment and consequent freedom from the illusions and limitations of the lower life. Since in gaining this Enlightenment the Sādhaka has to undergo certain physical and mental disciplines which are the same as those adopted by the followers of the Left-hand path, the two paths seem to run parallel for some distance. But the time comes at an early stage when the paths begin to diverge rapidly. One leads to an ever-increasing concentration of power in the individual and his isolation from the One Life, the other to the progressive merging of the individual consciousness in the One Consciousness and freedom from bondage and illusion. The hope of the former is naturally very limited and confined to the realm of the intellect while

there is no limit to the achievement of the Yogi on the other.

The main object of this relentless ethical code is to eliminate completely all mental and emotional disturbances which characterize the life of an ordinary human being. Anyone who is familiar with the working of the human mind should not find it difficult to understand that no freedom from emotional and mental disturbances is possible until the tendencies dealt with under Yama-Niyama have been rooted out or, at least, mastered to a sufficient degree. Hatred, dishonesty, deception, sensuality, possessiveness are some of the common and ingrained vices of the human race and as long as a human being is subject to these vices in their crude or subtle forms so long will his mind remain a prey to violent or hardly perceptible emotional disturbances which have their ultimate source in these vices. And, as long as these disturbances continue to affect the mind it is useless to undertake the more systematic and advanced practice of Yoga.

After this general consideration of Yama-Niyama let us discuss briefly the significance of the five moral qualities given in II-30 under Yama. Since this is a matter which is of the greatest importance to the beginner it may be discussed in some detail.

Ahimsā : Ahimsā really denotes an attitude and mode of behaviour towards all living creatures based on the recognition of the underlying unity of life. As Yogic philosophy is based on the doctrine of the One Life it is easy to see why our outer behaviour should be made to conform to this all-embracing Law of Life. If we understand this principle thoroughly the application of the ideal in our life will become much easier.

There are many people who, without making any earnest effort to practise Ahimsā, start raising imaginary problems and enter into academic discussions as to what Ahimsā really is and how far it is practicable in life. This is essentially a wrong approach to the problem because no hard and fast rules can be laid down in this as in other matters related to our conduct. Each situation in life is unique and requires a fresh and vital approach. What is right under a particular set of circumstances cannot be determined in a mechanical fashion by weighing all the facts and striking a balance. The correct insight into right action under every set of circumstances is the result of a developed and purified Buddhi or discriminative faculty and this function of Buddhi, unhindered by the complexes in our mind, is possible only after prolonged training in doing the right thing at all costs. It is only by doing the right that we get added strength to do right in the future and also acquire

the capacity to see what is right. There is no other way. So the Sādhaka who wishes to perfect himself in the practice of Ahimsā leaves all academic considerations aside, keeps a strict watch over his mind, emotions, words and actions and starts regulating them in accordance with his ideal. Slowly, as he succeeds in putting his ideal into practice, the cruelties and injustices involved in his thoughts, actions and words will gradually reveal themselves, his vision will clear up and the right course of conduct under every set of circumstances will become known intuitively. And gradually, this seemingly negative idea of harmlessness will transform itself into the positive and dynamic life of love both in its aspect of tender compassion towards all living creatures and its practical form, service.

Satya : The second moral quality denoted by the word Satya has also to be taken in a far more comprehensive sense than mere truthfulness. It means strict avoidance of all exaggerations, equivocation, pretence and similar faults which are involved in saying or doing things which are not in strict accordance with what we know as true. Downright lying is considered bad in civilized society but there are many variants of untruthfulness in speech and action which are not regarded as reprehensible in our conventional life. But all these must be completely eliminated from the life of the Sādhaka.

Why is truthfulness essential for the Yogic life?

Firstly because untruthfulness in all its various forms creates all kinds of unnecessary complications in our life and so is a constant source of disturbance to the mind. To the foolish man whose intuition has become clouded lying is one of the simplest and easiest means of getting out of an undesirable situation or difficulty. He is unable to see that in avoiding one difficulty in this manner he creates many others of a more serious nature. Anyone who decides to keep a watchful eye on his thoughts and actions will notice that usually one lie requires a number of other lies for its support and in spite of all his efforts, in most cases, circumstances take such an unexpected turn that the lie is exposed sooner or later. This effort to keep up falsehoods and false appearances causes a peculiar strain in our sub-conscious mind and provides a congenial soil for all kinds of emotional disturbances. Of course, these things are not noticed by the ordinary man living a life of conventional falsehoods. It is only when he begins to practise truthfulness that the subtler forms of untruthfulness begin to reveal themselves to his eye. It is a law of Nature that we become aware of the subtler forms of any vice when we have eliminated its grosser forms.

Apart from the considerations given above, truthfulness has to be practised by the Sādhaka because it is absolutely necessary for the unfoldment of Buddhi or intuition. The Yogi

has to face many problems, the solution of which cannot be found either in reference books or conclusions based on correct thinking. The only means at his disposal to solve such problems is an unclouded or pure Buddhi or intuition. Now, there is nothing which clouds the intuition and practically stops its functioning in this manner as untruthfulness in all its forms. A person who starts practising Yoga without first acquiring the virtue of utter truthfulness is like a man going for exploration into a jungle at night without any light. He has nothing to guide him in his difficulties and the illusions created by the Brothers of the Shadow are sure to lead him astray. That is why the Yogi must first put on the armour of perfect truthfulness in thought, word and deed, for no illusions can pierce such an armour.

Leaving these utilitarian considerations aside the absolute necessity of leading a perfectly straightforward life for the Yogi follows from the very nature of the Reality upon which the Universe and our life are based. This reality in its essential nature is Love and Truth and expresses itself through the great fundamental laws of Love and Truth which ultimately conquer everything. The outer and inner life of the Yogi who is seeking this Reality must, therefore, conform strictly to these basic laws of Nature if his efforts are to be crowned with success. Anything which is against the law of Love puts us out of harmony with this law and we are pulled



back sooner or later at the cost of much suffering to ourselves — that is why Ahimsā is enjoined. Similarly, untruthfulness in any form puts us out of harmony with the fundamental law of Truth and creates a kind of mental and emotional strain which prevents us from harmonizing and tranquillizing our mind.

**Asteya:** Asteya literally means abstaining from stealing. Here also we have to take the word in a very comprehensive sense and not merely interpret it in terms of the penal code. Few people who have developed some moral sense will go to the length of actual stealing but there are very few who can be considered quite guiltless from the strictly moral point of view. This is so because many indirect and subtle forms of misappropriation are connived at in our conventional life and our rather insensitive conscience does not feel appreciably disturbed when we take part in these shady transactions. The so-called civilized man will not allow himself to put a silver spoon in his pocket when he goes out to a public dinner but his conscience may not prick him adequately when he gives or receives gratification for doing his duty.

Asteya should really not be interpreted as abstaining from stealing but abstaining from misappropriation of all kinds. The would-be Yogi cannot allow himself to take anything which does not properly belong to him, not only in the way of money or goods but even such intangible and yet

highly prized things as credit for things he has not done or privileges which do not properly belong to him. It is only when a person succeeds in eliminating to a certain extent this tendency towards misappropriation in its cruder forms that he begins to discover the subtler forms of dishonesty which are woven in our life and of which we are hardly conscious. The aspirant who intends to tread the path of higher Yoga has to proceed systematically in the gradual elimination of these undesirable tendencies until their last traces have been removed and the mind rendered pure and in consequence tranquil. He should practise these prescribed virtues as a fine art aiming at greater and greater refinement in the application of the moral principles to the problems of his daily life.

Brahmacarya: Of all the virtues enjoined in Yama-Niyama this appears to be the most forbidding and many earnest students who are deeply interested in Yogic philosophy fight shy of its practical application in their life because they are afraid they will have to give up the pleasures of sex-indulgence. Many Western writers have tried to solve the problem by suggesting a liberal interpretation of Brahmacarya and taking it to mean not complete abstinence but regulated moderate indulgence within lawful wedlock. The Eastern student who is more familiar with the traditions and actual conditions of Yogic practice does not make this

mistake. He knows that the real Yogic life cannot be combined with the self-indulgence and waste of vital force which is involved in the pleasures of sex life and he has to choose between the two. He may not be required to give up sex life all at once but he has to give it up completely before he can start the serious practice of higher Yoga as distinguished from mere theoretical study or even Yogic practices of a preparatory nature.

To the serious and advanced student this desire to combine the enjoyments of the worldly life with the peace and transcendent knowledge of the higher life seems rather pathetic and shows the absence of a true sense of values with regard to the realities of the Yogic life and therefore unfitness for leading this life. Those who can equate or even consider comparable sensual enjoyments with the peace and bliss of the higher life for which the Yogi strives and can consequently hesitate in giving up the former, have yet to develop the strong intuition which tells them unequivocally that they have to sacrifice a mere shadow for the real thing, a passing sensation for life's greatest gift. Let the student who feels hesitation in giving up such enjoyments of the senses or seeks a compromise, honestly ask himself whether he believes that a person who is a slave of his passions is really fit to embark on this divine adventure and the answer that he will get from within will be

clear and unequivocal.

So this is the first thing which must be clearly understood with regard to Brahmacharya. The practice of higher Yoga requires complete abstinence from sex life and no compromise on this point is possible. Of course, there are many *Angas* of Yoga which the would-be Yogi can practise, to some extent, by way of preparation, but he must definitely and systematically prepare to give up completely not only physical indulgence but even thoughts and emotions connected with the pleasures of sex.

The second point to note in this connection is that Brahmacharya in its wider sense stands not only for abstinence from sexual indulgence but freedom from craving for all kinds of sensual enjoyments. The pursuit of sensual pleasures is so much a part of our life and we depend to such an extent on these for our happiness that it is considered quite natural and blameless for anybody to indulge in these enjoyments within the limits of moderation and social obligations. The use of scents, indulgence in the pleasures of the palate, wearing furs and similar pleasures of the senses are so common that no blame attaches to the pursuit of such enjoyments even where they involve terrible suffering to countless living creatures. It is all taken as a matter of course and very few people ever give even a passing thought to these things.

And for the man who is leading the ordinary life in the world moderate enjoyments of a kind which do not involve any suffering to other creatures do not really matter. They are a part of the normal life at his stage of evolution. But for the would-be Yogi these seemingly innocent enjoyments are harmful, not because there is anything 'sinful' about them, but because they carry with them the potentiality for constant mental and emotional disturbances. No one who allows himself to be attracted by the 'objects of the senses' can hope to be free from the worries and anxieties which characterize the life of the worldly man. Besides being a source of constant mental disturbance the pursuit of sensual enjoyments tends to undermine the will and to keep up an attitude of mind which militates against a whole-hearted pursuit of the Yogic ideal.

It is, however, necessary to understand what is really to be aimed at in giving up sensual enjoyments. As long as we are living in the world and moving among all kinds of objects which affect the sense-organs we cannot avoid feeling sensuous pleasures of various kinds. When we eat tasty food we cannot help feeling a certain amount of sensuous pleasure—it is the natural result of the food coming in contact with the taste-buds and arousing particular sensations. Has the Yogi then to attempt the impossible task of shutting out all pleasurable sensations? No! not at all. The trouble lies

not in feeling the sensation which is quite natural and in itself harmless but in the craving for the repetition of the experiences which involve pleasurable sensations. It is that which has to be guarded against and rooted out because it is the desire (Kāma) which disturbs the mind and creates Samskāras and not the actual sensation. The Yogi moves among all kinds of objects as anybody else but his mind is not attached to objects which give pleasure or repelled from objects which give pain. He is, therefore, unaffected by the presence or absence of different kinds of objects. The contact with an object produces a particular sensation but the matter ends there.

But this condition of non-attachment can be attained only after a very prolonged and severe self-discipline and renunciation of all kinds of objects which give pleasure, though in the case of some exceptional Sādhakas who bring powerful Samskāras from past lives it comes naturally and easily. There are some people who allow themselves to remain under the self-deception that they are unattached to enjoyments of the senses even though they continue outwardly to indulge in them. It will help these people to destroy this self-deception if they ask themselves seriously why they continue to indulge in those pleasures if they have really outgrown them. The fact is that for the ordinary Sādhaka it is only by renouncing pleasures of the senses that

indifference towards them can be developed and tested.

Austerity is thus a necessary part of the Yogic discipline. Those who allow themselves to lead the soft life of sensual pleasures under the illusion that 'these things do not touch them' are merely postponing the effort for the earnest pursuit of the Yogic ideal. To the worldly-minded this austerity appears forbidding if not meaningless and they frequently wonder what the Yogi really lives for. But to the Yogi this freedom from attachment brings an undefinable peace of mind and inner strength beside which the enjoyments of the senses appear intolerable.

Aparigraha: Aparigraha is sometimes translated as absence of greediness but non-possessiveness perhaps gives the underlying idea better. In order to understand why it is essential for the would-be Yogi to eliminate this tendency in his life we have only to consider the tremendous bias which it gives to our life. The tendency to accumulate worldly goods is so strong that it may be considered almost a basic instinct in human life. Of course, as long as we live in the physical world we have to have a few things which are essential for the maintenance of the body, although essential and non-essential are relative terms and there seems to be no limit to the cutting down of even what are considered the necessities of life. But we are not satisfied with the necessities of life. We must have things which may be classed

as luxuries. These are not necessary for keeping body and soul together but are meant to increase our comforts and enjoyments. We do not, however, stop even at luxuries. When we have at our disposal all the means that can ensure all possible comforts and enjoyments for the rest of our life we are still not satisfied and continue to amass wealth and things. One would think that a palace should suffice for the real needs of a human being but one who has a palace is not satisfied and wants to build a few more. Of course, these extra things do not serve any purpose except that of satisfying our childish vanity and desire to appear superior to our fellow men. There is no limit to our desire for wealth and the material things which we like to have around us and obviously, therefore, we are dealing here with an instinct which has no relation with reason or commonsense.

Apart from the complications which this human instinct causes in the world in the social and economic fields which we need not discuss here, its effect on the life of the individual is of a nature which makes its elimination for the would-be Yogi an absolute necessity. Let us consider a few of the factors which are involved. First, you have to spend time and energy in the accumulation of things which you do not really need. Then you have to spend time and energy in maintaining and guarding the things which you have



accumulated, the worries and anxieties of life increasing proportionately with the increase in the accumulations. Then consider the constant fear of losing the things, the pain and anguish of actually losing some of them every now and then and the regret of leaving them behind when you ultimately bid goodbye to this world. Now add up all these things and see what a colossal waste of time, energy and mental force all this involves. No one who is at all serious about the solution of the deeper problems of life can afford to squander his limited resources in this manner. So the would-be Yogi cuts down his possessions and requirements to the minimum and eliminates from his life all these unnecessary accumulations and activities which fritter away his energies and are a source of constant disturbance to the mind. He remains satisfied with what comes to him in the natural course of the working of the law of karma.

It may be pointed out, however, that it is really not the quantity of things by which we are surrounded but our attitude towards them which matters. For there may be only a few things in our possession and yet the instinct of possessiveness may be very strong. On the other hand, we may be rolling in wealth and yet be free from any sense of possession. Many interesting stories are told in the Hindu scriptures to illustrate this point, the story of Janaka who lived in a palace and the hermit who lived in a

but being well known. It is possible to live in the most luxurious circumstances with no feeling of possession and readiness to part with everything without the slightest hesitation. But though this is possible it is not easy and the would-be Yogi would do well to cut out all unnecessary things, for it is only in this way he can learn to live the simple and austere life. Even if he is not attached to his possessions he will have to spend time and energy in maintaining the paraphernalia and this he cannot afford to do.

But it must be clearly understood that the necessity for cultivating this virtue lies chiefly in ensuring a state of mind which is free from attachments. The additional advantages which have been referred to above, though important, are of a subsidiary nature.

### NIYAMAS

II.32      Sauca-samtoḡa-tapah-svādhyāyesvara-  
                  pranidhānāni niyamāḥ.

Purity, contentment, austerity, self-study and self-surrender constitute observances.

We now come to Niyama, the second Aṅga of Yogic discipline which serves to lay the foundation of the Yogic life. Before we deal with the five elements of Niyama enumerated in this sūtra it is necessary to consider the

distinction between Yama and Niyama. Superficially examined, Yama and Niyama both seem to have a common purpose — the transmutation of the lower nature so that it may serve properly as a vehicle of the Yogic life. But a closer study of the elements included under the two heads will reveal at once the difference in the general nature of the practices enjoined for bringing about the necessary changes in the character of the sādḥaka. The practices included in Yama are, in a general way, moral and prohibitive while those in Niyama are disciplinal and constructive. The former aim at laying the ethical foundation of the Yogic life and the latter at organizing the life of the sādḥaka for the highly strenuous Yogic discipline which is to follow.

This difference in the general purpose of Yama and Niyama involves a corresponding difference in the nature of the practices themselves. In the observance of the Great Vow connected with Yama the sādḥaka is not required to do anything. Day after day, he is required to react to the incidents and events in his life in a well-defined manner, but the number and character of the occasions which will arise in his life requiring the exercise of the five virtues will naturally depend upon his circumstances. If, for example, he goes and lives alone in a jungle as an ascetic there will hardly arise any occasion for putting the virtues into practice.

The Great Vow will be binding on him always, but if we may say so, will remain inoperative for want of opportunities for its practice.

Not so in the case of Niyama which involves practices which have to be gone through regularly, day after day, whatever the circumstances in which the sādḥaka is placed. Even if he is living alone completely isolated from all social relationships the necessity for going through these practices will remain as great as when he was living in the busy haunts of men.

Sauca: The first element of Niyama is Sauca or purity. Before we can understand how the problem of purifying our nature is to be tackled we should clarify our ideas with regard to purity. What is purity? According to the Yogic philosophy the whole of the Universe, seen or unseen, is a manifestation of the Divine Life and pervaded by the Divine Consciousness. To the Enlightened sage or saint who has had the Divine vision everything from an atom to the Isvara of a Brahmandā is a vehicle of the Divine Life and therefore pure and sacred. From this higher point of view nothing can therefore be considered impure in the absolute sense. So, when we use the words pure and impure in relation to our life we obviously use them in a relative sense. The word purity is used in relation to our vehicles, not only the body

which we can cognize with our physical senses but also the superphysical vehicles which serve as the instruments of emotion, thought and other spiritual faculties. A thing is pure in relation to a vehicle if it enables or helps the vehicle to serve efficiently as an instrument of the Divine Life expressing through it at the particular stage of evolution. It is impure if it hinders the full expression of that life or offers impediments in the exercise of the vehicle's functions. Purity is, therefore, nothing absolute, only functional and related to the next stage of evolution which life is seeking to attain. Purification, therefore, means elimination from the vehicles belonging to an individual of all those elements and conditions which prevent them from exercising their proper functions and attaining the goal in view. For the Yogi this goal is Self-realization through the merging of his individual consciousness with the Consciousness of the Supreme or the attainment of Kaivalya in terms of the Yoga-sūtra. Purification for the Yogi, therefore, means specifically the maintenance and transformation of the vehicle in such a manner that they can serve increasingly to bring about this unification.

Purity, though it is functional, depends to a great extent upon the quality of the material of which a particular vehicle of consciousness is composed. The functional efficiency

of the vehicle depends not only upon its structural organization but also upon the nature of the material incorporated in it. The expression of consciousness through a vehicle may be compared to the production of different kinds of sounds by a piece of stretched metallic wire. We know that the sound which is produced depends upon three factors, the nature of the metal, the structure (diameter and length) of the wire and the tension to which it is subjected. In the same way the capacity of a vehicle to respond to different states of consciousness depends upon its material, its structural complexity which increases as a result of evolution, and its sensitiveness.

The reason why the material of the vehicle determines to a certain extent its vibrational capacity lies in the fact that quality of material and vibrational capacity are indissolubly linked in nature, each kind of material responding to a limited range of vibrations. So, if we want to bring down into the lower vehicles the high and subtle vibrations corresponding to the deeper layers of human consciousness we must provide in them the right and corresponding type of material.

All the lower vehicles of a Jivātmā are constantly changing and purification consists in gradually and systematically replacing the comparatively coarse material of

the bodies by a more refined type of material. In the case of the physical body purification is a comparatively simple matter and may be brought about by supplying to the body the right kind of material in the form of food and drink. According to the Hindu system of Yogic culture foods and drinks are divided into three classes — Tāmasic, Rājasic and Sāttvic and only those which are considered Sāttvic are allowed to the Yogi who is building a pure and refined physical vehicle. Meat, alcohol and so many other accessories of a modern diet make the physical body utterly useless for the Yogic life and if the aspirant has been coarsening the body through the use of these he will have to go through a prolonged period of careful dieting to get rid of the undesirable material and make the body sufficiently refined.

The purification of the subtler vehicles which serve as instruments for the expression of thoughts and emotions is brought about by a different and more difficult process. In their case the vibrational tendencies are gradually changed by excluding all undesirable thoughts and emotions from the mind and replacing these constantly and persistently by thoughts and emotions of a higher and subtler nature. As the vibrational tendencies of these bodies change the matter of the bodies also changes *pari passu* and after some time, if the effort is continued long enough, the vehicles are adequately purified. The test of real purification is provided

by the normal vibrational tendencies which one finds in the vehicle. A pure mind easily and naturally thinks pure thoughts and feels pure emotions and it becomes difficult for it to entertain undesirable thoughts and emotions in the same way as it is difficult for an impure mind to entertain high and noble thoughts and emotions.

Another device recommended in the Hindu system of spiritual culture for the purification of the subtler vehicles is the constant use of Mantras and prayers. These make the vehicles vibrate frequently at very high rates of frequency, bring about an influx of spiritual forces from the planes above and the agitation thus set in motion, day after day, gradually washes out, as it were, all the undesirable elements from the different vehicles. It will be seen, therefore, that purification or *Sauca* is a positive practice. It does not take place of itself. One has to go through purificatory exercises, day after day, for long periods of time. That is why it has been included in *Niyama*.

**Santoṣa:** The second element of *Niyama* is *Santoṣa* which is generally translated as contentment. It is necessary for the aspirant for the Yogic life to cultivate contentment of the highest order because without it there is no possibility of keeping the mind in a condition of equilibrium. The ordinary man living in the world is subjected all day long to



all kinds of impacts, and he reacts to these impacts according to his habits, prejudices, training or mood of the moment, according to his nature as we say. These reactions involve in most cases greater or lesser disturbances of the mind, there being hardly any reaction which is not accompanied by a ruffling of the feeling or the mind. The disturbance from one impact has hardly had time to subside before another impact throws it out of equilibrium again. The mind seems to be apparently calm sometimes but this calmness is only superficial. Beneath the surface there is an undercurrent of disturbance like the swell in a superficially calm sea.

This condition of mind which need not necessarily be unpleasant and which is taken as natural by most people is not at all conducive to one-pointedness and as long as it lasts must result in *Viksepa*, the strong tendency of the mind to be outward-turned. So the *sādhaka* has to change this state of constant disturbance into a state of constant equilibrium and stillness by a deliberate exercise of the will, meditation and other means that may be available. He aims at attaining a condition in which he remains perfectly calm and serene whatever may happen in the outer world or even in the inner world of his mind. His aim is not merely to acquire the power to quell a mental disturbance if and when it arises but the more rare power to prevent any disturbance taking place at all.

He knows that once a disturbance has been allowed to occur it takes far more energy to overcome it completely and, even though outwardly it may disappear quickly, the inner subconscious disturbance persists for a long time.

This kind of equanimity can be built only on the foundations of perfect contentment, the capacity to remain satisfied whatever may happen to the sādḥaka. It is an extremely positive and dynamic condition of the mind which has nothing in common with that negative mentality which is based on laziness and lack of initiative and which is rightly held in profound contempt by people in the world. It is based on perfect indifference to all those personal enjoyments, comforts and other considerations which sway mankind. Its object is the attainment of that Peace which takes one completely beyond the realm of illusion and misery.

The cultivation of this supreme contentment and consequent tranquillity of the mind is the result of prolonged self-discipline and going through many experiences which involve pain and suffering. It cannot be acquired by a mere assertion of the will once for all. Habits stronger than nature and habits developed through innumerable lives cannot be changed all at once. That is why constant alertness and training of the mind in maintaining the right attitude is necessary and that is also why this virtue is placed under Niyama.

Tapas is a very comprehensive term and has really no exact English equivalent. It combines in itself the significations of a number of English words: purification, self-discipline, austerity. The word stands for a class of various practices the object of which is to purify and discipline the lower nature and to bring the vehicles of the Jivātmā under the control of an iron will. The meaning of the word is probably derived from the process of subjecting alloyed gold to strong 'heating' whereby all the dross is burnt off and pure gold is left behind. In a way the whole science of character-building whereby we purify and bring under control our lower vehicles may be considered as a practice of Tapas but in the orthodox sense the word Tapas is used particularly for some specific exercises adopted for the purification and control of the physical body and the development of will-power. These include such practices as fasting, observing vows of various kinds, Prāṇāyāma etc. Some misguided people take the most extraordinary vows in practising Tapas such as holding up the hand and keeping it in that position for a number of years even though it withers. But such foolish practices are considered highly reprehensible in the enlightened schools of Yoga and are called Āsuric, demoniacal.

The systematic practice of Tapas generally begins with simple and easy exercises which require the exertion of will-

power and is continued by progressive stages with more difficult exercises, the object of which is to bring about the dissociation of the vehicle from consciousness. In the case of the ordinary man the consciousness is to a great extent identified with the vehicle through which it works. The practice of Tapas gradually loosens up this association, enables the consciousness to be partially separated from the vehicle and this progressive awareness of the vehicle as part of the 'not-Self' means attenuation of 'Asmitā' or 'I am this' consciousness. It is only when this power to dissociate consciousness from the vehicles has been acquired to some extent that the Sādhaka can effectively purify and control the vehicles and use them for the purposes of Yoga.

**Svādhyāya:** The word Svādhyāya is sometimes used in a limited sense for the study of the sacred scriptures. But this is only a part of the work which has to be done—the first step. The student has naturally first to make himself thoroughly familiar with all the essential literature bearing on the different aspects of Yoga just as he does in the study of any science. In this way he acquires the necessary knowledge of the theoretical principles and practices which are involved in the pursuit of the Yogic ideal. He also gets an idea of the relative values of the different methods and a correct perspective with regard to all matters connected with Yogic practices.

While this study is only theoretical and does not take him very far on the road to Self-realization it is none the less of great value to the student. Many people who set out on this quest have a very vague and confused intellectual background and lack that clear and broad grasp of the subject which is so necessary for steady progress. Being insufficiently equipped with the necessary knowledge concerning the various problems which are involved they are apt to over-simplify these problems and to expect impossible results. Sooner or later they become disheartened and frustrated or fall a prey to those unscrupulous people who pose as great Yogis and promise all kinds of fantastic things to entice people into their fold. A broad and general intellectual background is necessary for achieving success in any sphere of scientific endeavour and since Yoga is a science par excellence it is true of this science also.

But though a thorough and detailed study of Yogic literature is a necessary part of Svādhyāya it is only the first step. The next is constant brooding and reflection over the deeper problems which have been studied in their intellectual aspect through books, etc. This constant reflection prepares the mind for the reception of real knowledge from within. It produces a sort of suctional action and draws the breath of intuition into the mind. The student thus begins to get a deeper insight into the problems of

Yogic life. The clearer the insight into these problems the keener becomes the desire for the real solution, for gaining that transcendent knowledge in the light of which all doubts are completely resolved and the Peace of the Eternal is attained. This brooding and reflection on the great and fundamental truths of life gradually and imperceptibly begins to take the form of meditation in the ordinary sense of the term, that is, the mind becomes increasingly engrossed in the object of the search. This object need not necessarily be an abstract truth of a philosophical nature. It may be an object of devotion with whom the Sādhaka wants to commune and become united. The nature of the object will differ according to the temperament of the individual but the condition of the mind— a state of deep absorption and intense desire to know— will be the same, more or less.

In bringing about this one-pointed state of absorption the use of Mantras is very helpful. The Sādhaka may use the Mantra of his Iṣṭa-Devatā or any of the well-known Mantras like Gayatri or Pranava. These Mantras, as has been shown already, harmonize the lower vehicles of consciousness, make them sensitive to the subtler vibrations and ultimately bring about a partial fusion of the lower and higher consciousness. So, it will be seen that though Svādhyāya begins with intellectual study it must be carried through the

progressive stages of reflection, meditation, Tapas etc. to the point where the sādḥaka is able to gain all knowledge or devotion from within, by his own efforts. That is the significance of the prefix Sva in Svādhyāya. He leaves all external aids such as books, discourses, etc. and dives into his own mind for everything he needs in his quest.

Īsvara-praṇidhāna: This is usually translated as resignation to Īsvara or God but in view of the fact that the advanced practice of Īsvara-praṇidhāna is able to bring about samādhi, it is obvious that the word is used in a far deeper sense than the superficial mental effort of the ordinary religious man to resign himself to the will of God. When such a man makes a mental assertion of this kind what he really means is that the will of God is supreme in the world over which He rules and he submits to that will gladly, although the experience which has evoked that assertion may not be a pleasant one. This attitude is not unlike the attitude of a loyal subject to the fiat of his king.

It is clear, however, that though this attitude of the pious individual is superior to the common attitude of resentment towards the inevitable calamities and sufferings of life and conduces to a peaceful state of mind, it cannot by itself take him very far along the path of spiritual unfoldment and realization which culminates in samādhi. The

fact that the progressive practice of Īsvara-pranidhāna can ultimately lead to samādhi shows definitely that it signifies a much deeper process of transformation in the sādhaka than a mere acceptance of whatever experiences and ordeals come to him in the course of his life.

To understand the significance and technique of Īsvara-pranidhāna it is necessary to recall how the Puruṣa gets involved in Prakṛti through Avidyā which results in his becoming subject to illusion and consequent sufferings and miseries of life. As this question has been discussed thoroughly in dealing with the theory of Klesas it is not necessary to go into its details here, but there is one central idea bearing on the problem under consideration which may be briefly referred to in this connection. According to the philosophy upon which the Science of Yoga is based, the Reality within us is free from the fundamental illusion which is responsible for the limitations and miseries of our life. The individual consciousness or Puruṣa is a manifestation of that Reality. How does he then become subject to the Great Illusion and the consequent sufferings of the lower life? By the imposition of the 'I' consciousness which makes him identify himself with his vehicles and with the environment in which his consciousness is immersed. As long as this veil of Asmitā or 'I'-ness covers his true nature—Svarūpa—he



remains bound by the limitations and illusions of life and the only way in which he can regain his freedom from them is by removing this covering of 'I' consciousness. This is the basic idea underlying the whole philosophy of Yoga and all systems of Yoga aim at the destruction of this 'I' consciousness directly or indirectly, by one means or another. The practice of Īsvara-praṇidhāna is one of such means. It has for its object the dissolution of Asmitā by the systematic and progressive merging of the individual will with the Will of Īsvara and thus destroying the very root of the Klesas.

The practice of Īsvara-praṇidhāna therefore begins with the mental assertion 'Not my will but Thy Will be done', but it does not end there. There is a steady effort to bring about a continuous recession of consciousness from the level of the personality which is the seat of 'I' consciousness into the consciousness of the Supreme whose will is working out in the manifested world. This effort may take many forms according to the temperament and previous saṃskāras of the sādhaka. There may be an earnest desire to become a conscious instrument of the Supreme Will which is finding expression in the unfolding of the manifested Universe. This Will finds obstruction in its expression at the human level owing to the limitations of the personality, the greater

the egoism the greater the obscuration and the consequent obstruction. Such a Sādhaka who is trying to practise Īsvara-praṇidhāna tries to remove this obstruction of the personality by doing Niṣkāma-Karma, so that his personality may become a willing and conscious instrument of the Divine Will. It is needless to say that this is a gradual process and for a long time the Sādhaka has to work, as it were, in the dark, trying to do scrupulously what he thinks to be right without having any conscious knowledge of the Divine Will. It is, however, not necessary to know the Divine Will until the personality has been brought under control, for even if that Will were known the wayward and uncontrolled personality will not allow it to be expressed freely and fully. But as in all processes of this nature the effort to realize an ideal gradually removes the obstructions in the way of realization and if the Sādhaka pursues his ideal with perseverance he succeeds in becoming a conscious agent of the Divine. His false lower 'I' disappears and the Divine Will can work freely through the 'I' -less centre of his consciousness. This is real Karma-Yoga.

The practice of Īsvara-praṇidhāna takes a different form if the Sādhaka is a person with a highly emotional temperament and is greading the path of Bhakti. Here the emphasis is not on the merging of the individual will in the

Divine Will but on the union with the Beloved through love. But as love naturally expresses itself in self-abnegation and subordination of personal desires to the Will of the Beloved the path of Bhakti also leads indirectly to the dissolution of the 'I' or Asmitā. Here it is love which is the driving force and which brings about the destruction of egoism and fusion of consciousness and Samādhi is the result.

The careful student will be able to see in Īsvara-pranidhāna the essence of Bhakti-Yoga. It is thought by many students of the system of Yoga outlined in the Yoga-Sūtras that there is not much of a place for a Bhakta in this system, and Bhakti has not been given the weight it deserves considering its importance in spiritual culture. It is true that the manner in which the subject has been dealt with by Patanjali does give that impression, but does not Īsvara-pranidhāna contain in a nutshell the whole essential technique of Bhakti-Yoga? Navadhā-Bhakti which comprises the practical side of Bhakti-Yoga is merely of a preparatory nature and it is meant to lead the Sādhaka to the stage where he is able to renounce all external aids and to surrender himself completely to the Will of the Lord and depend upon Him completely for everything. Surely, this advanced technique of spiritual culture and ultimate union with the Beloved in Samādhi is nothing but Īsvara-pranidhāna.

ASANA

II.46

Sthira-sukham āsanam.

Posture (should be) steady and comfortable.

The students of Yoga are generally familiar with the practices which are denoted by the word Āsana. In fact, many people who do not know anything about Yoga confuse it with these physical exercises. It is, however, necessary even for the student of Yogic philosophy to understand clearly the place and purpose of Āsanas in Rāja-Yoga, for in Haṭha-Yoga and certain systems of physical culture their purpose is very different. In Haṭha-Yoga the subject of Āsanas is treated at great length and there are at least 84 Āsanas which are described in detail, very specific and sometimes exaggerated results being attributed to many of them. There is no doubt that many of these Āsanas, by affecting the endocrine glands and Prāṇic currents, tend to bring about very marked changes in the body and if practised correctly and for a sufficiently long time, promote health in a remarkable manner. Haṭha-Yoga is based on the principle that changes in consciousness can be brought about by setting in motion currents of certain kinds of subtler forces (Prāṇa, Kundalini) in the physical body. The first step in contacting the deeper levels of consciousness is, therefore, to make the physical body perfectly healthy and fit for the influx and

manipulation of these forces. That is why such a strong emphasis is laid on the preparation of the physical body and the sādḥaka is required to go through different kinds of physical exercises which are dealt with in treatises on Hatha-Yoga.

In Rāja-Yoga, however, the method adopted for bringing about changes in consciousness is based essentially on the control of the mind by the will and the gradual suppression of the Gitta-Vṛttis. The technique of Rāja-Yoga is, therefore, directed towards the elimination of all sources of disturbance to the mind, whether these sources are external or internal. Now, one of the important sources of disturbance to the mind is the physical body. Even modern psychology recognizes the close connection between the mind and the body and how they act and react on each other all the time. So the Yogi must eliminate completely the disturbances which arise from the physical body before he tries to tackle the problem of the mind itself. This is achieved through the practice of Āsana. The physical body is fixed in one particular posture and it is found that when it can be kept like this for a long time it ceases to be a source of disturbance to the mind.

Patanjali gives only three sūtras regarding the technique of Āsanās but in these he has condensed all the essential knowledge concerning the subject. The first of these

given above points out the two essential requirements in the practice of Āsana. It should be steady and comfortable. The Yogi has to choose any one of the well-known Āsanās suitable for the practice of meditation such as Padmāsana or Siddhāsana and then practise remaining in that posture until he can maintain it for long periods of time without the slightest inclination to make any movement. Sitting in any Āsana becomes uncomfortable after a few minutes and the beginner will find that he cannot maintain it for any considerable time without feeling minor discomforts in various parts of the body. If, however, the Āsana is correctly chosen and practised in the right way, steady and persistent practice will gradually eliminate all these minor discomforts which cause constant distractions to the mind. The Yogi is then able to maintain his body in the correct posture indefinitely and to forget it altogether. If, in spite of prolonged practice and good health, one always feels discomfort in maintaining the posture for long periods there is something wrong either with one's choice of the Āsana or method of practising it and it is advisable to seek expert advice.

It is also necessary to understand thoroughly the implication of the word 'steady'. Steadiness does not mean merely the capacity to remain more or less in the same

position with freedom to make minor movements and adjustments from time to time. It means a certain degree of immovability which practically amounts to fixing the body in one position and eliminating all movements of any kind. In trying to maintain this immovable position the beginner is apt to introduce a certain amount of rigidity which makes the body tense. This is definitely wrong and will react adversely on the health of the body. What should be aimed at is the ideal combination of immovability with relaxation. It is only then that it is possible to forget the body altogether.

A particular Āsana is considered to be mastered when the Sādhaka can maintain it steadily and easily for four hours and twenty minutes. This period of time as given in some books on Haṭha-Yoga has really no important significance and gives merely an approximate idea of the length of time for which practice may be undertaken for gaining mastery. Once the habit has been acquired the posture can be maintained for any length of time while the Yogi's attention is focussed on his mind.

#### PRANAYAMA

II. 49      Tasmin sati svāsa-prasvasayor gati-  
vicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ.

This having been (accomplished) Prāṇāyāma which is cessation of inspiration and expiration (follows).

The reason why Prāṇāyāma plays such an important part in the technique of Yoga lies in the close relation existing between Prāṇa and mind. Prāṇa which exists on all the planes of manifestation is the connecting link between matter and energy on the one hand and consciousness and mind on the other. Consciousness expressing itself through the mind cannot come into touch with matter and function through it without the intermediate presence of Prāṇa. Matter in association with energy cannot affect consciousness except through the agency of Prāṇa. That is why Prāṇa is found on all the planes. It is necessary for the vitalization and functioning of all vehicles of consciousness, physical or superphysical. This capacity to act as intermediary depends upon its peculiar constitution. It combines in itself in some mysterious manner the essential qualities of both matter and consciousness and is thus able to serve as an instrument for their actions and reactions on each other.

This intimate relation existing between Prāṇa and mind is utilized in different schools of Yoga in different ways. In Haṭha-Yoga manipulation of Prāṇic currents is utilized for bringing about control of Gitta-Vṛttis and changes in consciousness. In Rāja-Yoga, Gitta-Vṛttis are controlled by consciousness through the will and Prāṇa thus comes under the control of the mind. Patañjali has included both the



techniques in his system in order to make it as comprehensive and effective as possible. Thus Prāṇāyāma is utilized for preparing the mind for Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi on the one hand and Samyama on various objects or principles used for acquiring Siddhis on the other.

Although students of Yogic philosophy are generally familiar with the theory of Prāṇāyāma and a fairly extensive literature exists on the subject it would be worthwhile discussing here very briefly some fundamental facts in this connection. This will clear the ground for understanding the inner significance of the five Sūtras in which Patañjali has dealt with the subject.

Many people who have not studied the subject or studied it very superficially have the notion that Prāṇāyāma is merely a regulation of breathing. How it is possible by merely regulating breathing which is a normal physiological process in the body, to bring about the extraordinary results attributed to Prāṇāyāma does not occur to them. The nature of Prāṇāyāma is indicated by the two words which constitute the compound word, namely Prāṇa and Āyāma (restraint). It is the regulation of Prāṇa. But what is Prāṇa? It is not the breath but the vital force which keeps up the activities of the physical body. This vital force is not something vague and mysterious which medical science believes exists within

the body maintaining its equilibrium and guarding it against disease and death. It is a real, highly specialized kind of composite energy with a material basis which is entirely different from the other kinds of energies working in the body. The vehicle of this Prāṇa is not the dense physical body with which physiologists are familiar but the Prāṇamaya Kosa, a somewhat subtler vehicle interpenetrating the dense physical body and working in conjunction with it. In this subtler vehicle which is practically a counterpart of the dense physical body run currents of Prāṇa, flowing along well-marked channels into every organ and part of the body and vitalizing them in different ways. For, Prāṇa though it is a general vitalizing force, has also specific functions to perform in different organs and parts of the body and is then called by different names which are well known. It is the control of this Prāṇa which is aimed at in Prāṇāyāma and not breathing which is only one of the many manifestations of its action in the physical body.

But though Prāṇa is different from breath as the electric current is different from the movement of the blades in an electric fan, still, there is a close connection between the two, a connection which enables us to manipulate the currents of Prāṇa by manipulating breathing. This close connection between breathing and Prāṇa is, no doubt, responsible for the

confusion between the two but it is necessary for the student to keep this distinction clearly in his mind.

The methods adopted in controlling and manipulating Prāṇa by regulation of the breath are a closely guarded secret which can be obtained only from a competent teacher. Those who take up these practices after merely reading books are sure to ruin their health and even risk insanity or death. So, no one should dabble in Prāṇāyāma for the sake of fun or for gaining supernormal powers of various kinds or even for hastening his spiritual progress. These forces are very real though not known as yet to modern Science, and many people have ruined their lives by rashly starting practices given in spurious Yogic literature or under the advice of immature and over-confident 'Yogis'. The practice of Prāṇāyāma can be taken up safely and profitably only as a part of the full Yogic discipline and when adequately prepared for by the practice of the other accessories of Yoga such as Yama-Niyama, Āsana etc. and under the supervision of a competent Guru.

But while abstaining strictly from the ill-advised practice of Prāṇāyāma proper there is no harm in trying to understand its rationale and the limit to which one can go with safety in the manipulation of breathing for the sake of promoting physical and mental health. The essential

knowledge with regard to this aspect of the subject may be summarized as follows:

- (1) Deep breathing has nothing to do with Prāṇāyāma and may be practised as an exercise for promoting health to any reasonable extent. Its beneficial effects depend chiefly upon the increased intake of oxygen and a somewhat greater influx of Prāṇa into the body. As it does not affect the Prāṇic currents in the body its practice is not attended by any risks.
- (2) Breathing alternately through the two nostrils begins at once to affect the Prāṇic currents to a certain extent and tends to remove the congestion from the channels in which Prāṇa flows normally. It has been pointed out already that there is a close relation between breathing and the flow of Prāṇic currents in the Prāṇamaya Kosa. When we breathe normally the Prāṇic currents follow their natural course. When we breathe alternately through the two nostrils their normal flow is disturbed in some way. The effect may be likened to the flow of water in a pipe. When the water is flowing in one direction placidly, silt and other things may be deposited at the bottom and are not

disturbed to any marked extent by the water. But try to force the water in opposite directions alternately and you at once disturb the deposit and if the process is continued long enough the pipe gets cleaned ultimately. This is how breathing alternately through the two nostrils may be supposed to clean the Prāṇic channels or to 'purify the Nādis' as we say. Now, this purification of the Nādis is a preparatory exercise and all those who intend to practise Prāṇāyāma have to go through a long course extending over several months or years. It is similar to the preliminary exercise suggested by Patañjali in I-34 and produces the same condition in the nervous system, namely absence of irritation and tranquillity. This exercise is not attended with any risk and can be adopted with caution by those who live a well-regulated and clean life and are not given to excesses of any kind. But since the Prāṇic currents are affected in the process, caution and moderation are necessary and it is advisable to work under the supervision of an expert.

- (3) Real Prāṇāyāma begins when the breath is stopped for some time between inhalation and exhalation. While breathing alternately through the two nostrils

the breath may be stopped for some time, the period being increased gradually and cautiously. The retention of breath, called technically Kumbhaka, affects the flow of Prāṇic currents in a very marked and fundamental manner and enables the Yogi to gain increasing control over these currents so that they can be directed in any manner desired.

- (4) Prāṇāyāma has to be practised with Pūraka and Recaka (inspiration and expiration) for a long time, the period of Kumbhaka being slowly increased over long periods of time. Such a Kumbhaka which is accompanied by Pūraka and Recaka is called Sahita Kumbhaka. But after prolonged practice it is possible to dispense with Pūraka and Recaka and practise Kumbhaka alone. Such Prāṇāyāma, called Kevala Kumbhaka, gives complete control over Prāṇa and enables the Yogi to perform not only all kinds of physical feats but also to arouse and direct Kuṇḍalinī towards different centres in the body. This science is a strictly guarded secret and can be learnt only by a properly qualified Celā from a properly qualified Guru.

The important point to keep in mind is this. Not only is Kumbhaka the essential element of real Prāṇāyāma but it is

also the source of danger in the practice of Prāṇāyāma. The moment one starts retaining the breath, especially inside, in any abnormal manner the danger begins and one can never know what it will lead to, unless there is a practical and competent teacher at hand to guide and correct the flow of these forces if necessary. If all the requisite conditions are present and Kumbhaka is practised under the guidance of a competent teacher it unlocks the doors of unexpected experiences and powers. If it is taken up without the necessary preparation and guidance it is sure to lead to disaster and may be death, as many rash and foolish people have found to their cost.

The significance of the words Tasmin Sati in the beginning of the Sūtra should be kept in mind. As this Sūtra comes after the three Sūtras dealing with Āsanās these words obviously mean that the practice of Prāṇāyāma involving Kumbhaka cannot be undertaken until and unless one of the Āsanās has been mastered. The practice of Āsana definitely but slowly prepares the body for Prāṇāyāma. It is the common experience of practical students of Yoga that the body begins naturally to assume more and more the condition necessary for the practice of Prāṇāyāma as perfection in the practice of Āsana is gained. The breath begins to move slowly and rhythmically and even Kumbhaka occurs for short periods in a natural way.

In fact, it is not only necessary to master Āsana but also to acquire some proficiency in the practice of Yama-Niyama before beginning the practice of Prāṇāyāma. The advanced practice of Prāṇāyāma arouses the Kuṇḍalinī sooner or later. This can be done safely only after the desire for sex gratification has been completely mastered and eliminated. Unless, therefore, the Sādhaka has practised Brahmacharya and other elements of Yama-Niyama for a long time and has acquired conscious and real mastery over his desires and propensities it would be disastrous for him to engage in the practice of Prāṇāyāma. It must be clearly understood that these things are not meant for people who are leading the ordinary life of the world with all its desires and indulgences and who naively want to peace and bliss of the inner life as an addition to their multitudinous enjoyments in the outer world. The door on the enjoyments and comforts of the lower life has to be shut completely and once for all before one can hope to make any real progress on the path of Yoga.

The different elements of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga are not merely eight essential but quite independent parts of Yoga which can be practised irrespective of one another. They should be taken in the light of progressive stages, each stage preparing for the succeeding ones and requiring an adequate degree of perfection in the preceding ones. The whole treatment of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga by Patañjali and the experience of Sādhakas lends support to this view.



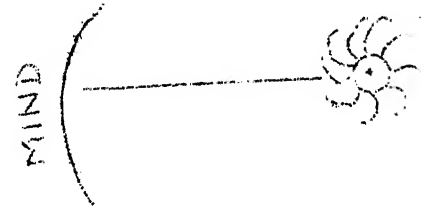
PRATYAHĀRA

II.54 Sva-viṣayāsamprayoge citta-svarūpānukāra  
ivendriyānām pratyāhārah.

Pratyāhāra or abstraction is, as it were, the imitation by the senses of the mind by withdrawing themselves from their objects.

Pratyāhāra is the next Aṅga or component part of Yoga after Prāṇāyāma. There seems to exist a good deal of uncertainty in the mind of the average student with regard to the nature of this Yogic practice. Patañjali has disposed of the subject in two Sūtras and the commentaries are not very illuminative. In order to understand what Pratyāhāra really means let us recall how mental perception of objects in the outer world takes place. We perceive an object when different kinds of vibrations which emanate from it strike our sense-organs and the mind is then joined to the sense-organs thus activated. As a matter of fact, from the physiological and psychological points of view there are many stages intervening between the reception of the vibration by the sense-organs and the perception by the mind but let us, for the sake of simplicity, confine ourselves to the simple representation of the mechanism of sense-perception as generally understood. This may be represented diagrammatically as follows:

Bhūtas (elements)	Indriyas (sense- organs)	Tanmātras (sensations)	Citta (mind)	Buddhi (per- ception)	Ātmā (Spirit)
Prithvi (earth)	Nose	smell			
Jala (water)	tongue	taste			
Tejas (light)	eye	sight			
Vāyu (air)	skin	touch			
Ākāśa (ether)	ear	hearing			



Now, it is a matter of common experience that the corresponding vibrations may be striking against any particular sense-organ but if the mind is not joined, as it were, to that sense-organ the vibrations remain unperceived. The clock in our room keeps ticking constantly but we rarely hear the ticking. Although the vibrations of sound are striking the ear constantly the conscious mind is not joined to the organ of hearing as far as those vibrations are concerned. When we pass down a road vibrations from hundreds of objects strike our eye but we notice only a few, the rest not entering our consciousness at all because of this lack of contact between the mind and those vibrations. Innumerable vibrations from all kinds of objects are thus constantly impinging upon our sense-organs but most of these remain unnoticed. Still, a few do manage to catch our attention and these in their totality constitute the content of our awareness of the external world.

A very interesting fact about this process of sense-perception is that although the mind is automatically ignoring the vast majority of vibrations bombarding its sense-organs it cannot shut out all of them voluntarily if it wants to. A few vibrations always manage to catch the attention and the mind is generally helpless against the inroads of these unwanted intruders. In fact, the more it tries to shut them out the more numerous and insistent they become as anyone can find out for himself by making a few efforts in this direction.

But, for the practice of Rāja Yoga the outer world has to be shut out completely, whenever necessary, in order that the Yogi may have his mind alone to grapple with. Let us go into this question a little more in detail. If we examine the contents of our mind at any time when we are not making any particular mental effort we shall find that the mental images which are present and changing constantly may be divided into the following three categories: (1) Ever-changing impressions produced by the outer world through the vibrations impinging upon the sense-organs. (2) Memories of past experiences floating in the mind. (3) Mental images connected with anticipations of the future. (2) and (3) are wholly mental, not depending upon any objective reality outside the mind while (1) are the direct result of contact with the outer world. The object of Pratyāhāra is to eliminate (1)

completely from the mind, thus leaving only (2) and (3) which are then mastered through Dhāraṇā and Dhyāna. Pratyāhāra interposes, as it were, a shutter between the sense-organs and the mind and isolates the latter completely from the external world.

In the light of what has been said above it should be easy to understand the meaning of the rather enigmatic sūtra we are discussing. It will help us to appreciate the manner in which the idea has been expressed if we remember that according to Yogic psychology the senses are really a part of the lower mind. They are, as it were, the outposts of the mind in the external world and should follow the lead of the mind. When the mind wants to put itself in touch with the external world they should begin to function. When it decides to withdraw they should be able to withdraw with it, thus breaking all connection with the world outside. This relation between the mind and the senses has been likened very aptly to the relation existing between the bees in a hive and the queen bee. The bees follow the queen in a body as it flies from one place to another, and do not function independently of the queen.

In this complete severance of connection with the world outside in the manner indicated possible? It is not only possible but absolutely necessary if the higher stages of the Yogic path are to be trodden. But in order that success

may be attained the Yogic life has to be adopted as a whole. All the different steps or component parts of Yogic discipline are linked with one another and success in tackling any particular problem depends to a great extent upon how far the other related problems, especially those going before, have been mastered. If Yama and Niyama have not been practised sufficiently and all emotional disturbances eliminated, if Āsana and Prāṇāyāma have not been mastered and the physical body brought under complete control, then surely, the practice of Pratyāhāra is bound to end in failure. But if the whole of the Sādhaka's life conforms to the Yogic ideal and all his energies are bent on achieving his ultimate goal then success must come sooner or later.

It should also be mentioned here that though Pratyāhāra appears to be a control of the senses by the mind, the essential technique is really the withdrawal of the mind into itself. It is a kind of abstraction so complete that the sense-organs cease to function. Any school boy who is intensely interested in a novel cuts himself off from the outer world. Any inventor like Edison who is absorbed in a problem can forget the external world completely. But in all such cases, although a high degree of abstraction is attained, abstraction is involuntary and there is something in the external world on which the mind is concentrated. In Pratyāhā-

the abstraction is voluntary and the mind has no object of attraction in the external world. Its field of activity is entirely within itself and the external world is kept out by the sheer force of will, as in Rāja Yoga, or by the supreme attractive power of an object of love within, as in Bhakti Yoga.

### DHĀRAṆĀ

#### III.1      Desa-bandhas cittasya dhāraṇā.

Concentration is the confining of the mind within a limited mental area (object of concentration).

As has been pointed out already, the first five Aṅgas of Yoga eliminate, step by step, the external causes of mental distraction. Yama and Niyama eliminate the disturbances which are caused by uncontrolled emotions and desires. Āsana and Prāṇāyāma eliminate the disturbances arising from the physical body. Pratyāhāra, by detaching the sense-organs from the mind, cuts off the external world and the impressions which it produces on the mind. The mind is thus completely isolated from the external world and the Sādhaka is thus in a position to grapple with it without any interference from outside. It is only under these conditions that the successful practice of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi is possible.

Although the different Aṅgas of Yoga appear to be independent of each other and it may be possible to a certain extent to practise Āsana, Dhyāna etc. independently of other Aṅgas, still, we have to keep in mind that they have also a sequential relationship and the effective practice of one Aṅga requires at least a partial mastery of those which precede it. The main reason why the vast majority of aspirants for the Yogic life keep struggling with the mind year after year and then generally give up the effort as a hopeless task lies in the lack of systematic preparation without which even the elementary practice of Dhāraṇā is very difficult, to say nothing of the further stages of Dhyāna and Samādhi. Theoretically it is possible for the student to start right away with the mind and he may succeed in practising meditation to a certain extent but he cannot go very far in this manner and his progress is bound to come to a stop sooner or later. It is only when he has prepared himself in the manner indicated above that he can go on steadily right up to the end. In the rare cases where people have practised meditation successfully without any other kind of preparation it will be found that they had already developed the necessary qualifications, even though they did not go through all the practices in this life. It is the possession of the qualifications and not going through the prescribed practices which determines the fitness of the sādḥaka for taking up the practice of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna

and Samādhi. These qualifications for the Yogic life are the cumulative result of several lives of effort in this direction and one need not go through every practice in a particular life. Some people are born, for example, with a high degree of Vairāgya and show even in their childhood a remarkable capacity for controlling their vehicles. They have not to go through the long and tedious discipline which is essential for the ordinary man. Anyway, Patanjali has pointed out unambiguously the necessity of going through the first five Aṅgas of Yoga before taking up the practice of Dhāraṇā, as for example in II-53.

Before dealing with the question of Dhāraṇā it is necessary to point out that though the word concentration has to be used for translating Dhāraṇā there is a great deal of difference between what an ordinary man means by concentration of mind and what this phrase means in Yogic psychology. Without going into details it may be stated that the main difference, and a very fundamental difference, is that according to modern psychology the mind cannot be made to remain fixed on any object for any considerable time. It must remain moving even when concentration of the highest degree has been attained. Concentration according to this view is the controlled movement of the mind within a limited sphere and by keeping the mind confined in this manner all the remarkable results of concentrated mental effort can be obtained. But according



to Eastern psychology upon which the Science of Yoga is based, though concentration begins with the controlled movement of the mind it can reach a state in which all movement or change stops. In this ultimate stage the mind becomes one with the essential nature of the object concentrated upon and can thus move no further.

Eastern psychology recognizes the uses of the ordinary type of concentration but it holds that there are two limitations in this kind of concentration. One is that the mind can never fully realize the essential nature of the object concentrated upon. However deep it may penetrate, it still touches only the fringe or superficial aspects of its nature and can never reach the core. The second limitation is that with this kind of concentration consciousness always remains confined within the prison-house of the intellect. It cannot be released from the limitations of the intellect to be able to function at the deeper levels through the subtler vehicles. For, to be able to jump from one plane to another the mind must be brought first to that condition in which it is without movement though 'shining' with the object which holds the field of consciousness.

Let us now come to the particular stage of concentration dealt with in this Sūtra. In Dhāraṇā as this first stage is called, the mind is confined within a limited sphere defined

by the object which is being concentrated upon. The phrase Desa-Bandha means confinement within a territory which allows a limited freedom of movement. The mind is interned, as it were, within the limited mental territory and has to be brought back immediately if it strays out. The reason why a limited freedom of movement is possible when the mind is being concentrated upon a particular object will be seen if we remember that every object has innumerable aspects and the mind can consider these aspects only one by one. So that, while it takes up one aspect after another it is moving and yet really fixed on the object of concentration. Or it may be that the object may involve a process of reasoning consisting of many steps connected logically with each other and forming an integrated whole. Here also there can be movement without really leaving the object of concentration. It is only when the mind gets out of touch with the object and an unconnected and irrelevant object enters it that Dhāraṇā may be considered to be broken. The main work in Dhāraṇā therefore consists in keeping the mind continuously engaged in the consideration of the object and to bring it back immediately as soon as the connection is broken. The objective which the sādḥaka should place before himself is to reduce progressively the frequency of such interruptions and to eliminate them completely ultimately. But it is not only the elimination of interruptions which has to be aimed

at but complete focussing of the mind on the object. Vague and blurred impressions should be replaced by sharply defined mental images by increasing the degree of alertness and power of attention. So, the condition of the mind during the period when it is engaged with the object is as important as the frequency of the interruptions which break the connection. But as the nature of this stage of concentration is generally understood we need not elaborate this point further.

### DHYĀNA

#### III.2      Tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam

Uninterrupted flow (of the mind) towards the object (chosen for meditation) is contemplation.

It was pointed out in the previous Sūtra that the Sādhaka should aim at eliminating the intruding thoughts which are called distractions and should see that such interruptions are reduced in frequency in a progressive manner. When he succeeds in eliminating the distractions completely and can continue the concentration on the object without any interruptions for as long as he decides to do so he reaches the stage of Dhyāna. It will be seen, therefore, that it is the occasional appearance of distractions in the mind which constitutes the essential difference between Dhāraṇā and Dhyāna. Since this Sūtra is very important from the practical

point of view let us first examine the significance of the various Samskr̥ta words used in defining Dhyāna.

Let us first take the word Pratyaya which is used frequently in the Yoga-Sūtras. This word covers a wide range of notions such as concept, idea, cause etc., but in Yogic terminology it is generally used for the total content of the mind which occupies the field of consciousness at a particular time. As the mind is capable of holding a large variety of objects simultaneously a word has to be used to denote all these objects taken together irrespective of their nature. Pratyaya is a technical word for this total content of the mind. In view of what has been said above about Dhāraṇā, it will be seen that this Pratyaya with which the mind remains in continuous contact in Dhyāna is fixed and yet a variable thing. It is fixed in the sense that the area within which the mind moves is defined and remains the same. It is variable because within that limited area or sphere there is movement. A few illustrations will make this point clear. When a scientist focusses his microscope on a drop of dirty water the field of vision is defined and limited within a circle and he cannot see anything outside it. But within that circular patch of light there are constant movements of all kinds. Or, take a river which is flowing within well-defined banks. There is constant movement of the water and yet this movement is confined within the banks of the river. A person

who looks at a river from an aeroplane sees a thing which is fixed and moving at the same time. These illustrations help us to understand the dual nature of the Pratyaya in Dhyāna and the possibility of keeping the mind moving within the limits defined by the object of meditation.

The Samskṛta word Tatra means 'in that place' and obviously refers to the Desa or place or mental territory within which the mind is confined. The mind has to remain united with the Pratyaya within the limits defined in Dhāraṇā. The mind of any person remains united with the Pratyaya while he is in waking consciousness. But not only is the Pratyaya changing all the time but the mental territory is also changing because the mind is flitting from one subject to another.

Ekatānatā which means 'extending continuously or unbrokenly' refers to the absence of interruptions from distractions which are present in Dhāraṇā. In fact, as pointed out above, continuity of the Pratyaya is the only thing which distinguishes Dhāraṇā from Dhyāna from the technical point of view. This continuity may be compared to the continuity of the flow of water in a river or that of oil being poured from one vessel into another. Why is it essential to achieve this kind of continuity before Samādhi can be practised? Because every break in the continuity means distraction and distraction means lack of adequate concentration

and grip over the mind. If the mind is diverted from the chosen object it means that some other object has taken its place, for there must be continuity in the movement of the mind. It is only in Nirodha that the continuity of the movement can be broken without any other object occupying the mind. Now, if a distraction breaks the continuity, apparently, there is not much harm done, for the mind can take up the thread immediately and continue with its work of diving deep into the subject. But actually, the appearance of the distraction is not as innocuous as it appears. It shows the absence of sufficient grip over the mind and a corresponding lack in the depth of concentration. In practising Dhāraṇā it is found that as the depth of abstraction increases and the grip over the mind becomes stronger, the frequency with which the distractions appear becomes smaller. So, continuity should be regarded as a gauge for measuring the necessary control over the mind and intensity of concentration. The attainment of Dhyāna Avasthā shows that the mind is getting ready for the last stage and the real practice of Yoga. Unless and until this condition is fulfilled the practice of Samādhi cannot be begun and the real secrets of Yoga will remain hidden from the sādḥaka.

### SAMĀDHI

III.3        Tad evāṛthamātra-nirbhāsaṃ svarūpa-  
                 sūnyam iva samādhīh.

The same (contemplation) when there is consciousness only of the object of meditation and not of itself (the mind) is samādhī.

Now we come to the last stage of the concentration of the mind. This marks the culmination of the previous preparation to make it fit to dive into the realm of realities which lie hidden behind the phenomenal world. The subject of samādhī has been dealt with thoroughly in Section I. But in that Section its more general and deeper aspects were considered. In the present context it is therefore necessary to deal only with its introductory aspects especially with its relation to Dhāraṇā and Dhyāna. On account of the unusual manner in which the subject of samādhī has been dealt with by Patanjali it will be necessary for the student to study carefully its various aspects several times before he can grasp its essential nature and technique. But the time and mental energy which he spends will be worth while for he will acquire in this manner an understanding of the essential technique of Yoga, the only technique which can unlock the gates of the world of Reality.

When the state of Dhyāna has been well established and the mind can hold the object of meditation without any distractions it is possible to know the object much more

intimately than in ordinary thinking, but even then a direct knowledge of its very essence is not obtained and the reality hidden within the object seems to elude the Yogi. He is like a general who has reached the very gates of the fort which he has to conquer but the gates are closed and he is unable to enter the fort. What is standing between him and the reality of the object which he wants to know? III-3 gives an answer to this question. The mind itself is preventing the realization of the very essence of the object of meditation. All the distractions have been completely eliminated and the consciousness is fully focussed on the object of meditation. How does the mind interfere with the realization of the very essence of the object? By interposing consciousness of itself between the reality hidden behind the object and the consciousness of the Yogi. It is this self-consciousness or subjectivity, pure and simple, which serves as a veil to keep it separated from the object and to hide the reality he is seeking.

To understand how consciousness of the mind of itself can become a bar to further progress, let us recall how this self-consciousness interferes with intellectual work of the highest order. A great musician is able to create his best productions when he loses himself completely in his work. An inventor solves his greatest problems when he is not



conscious of solving any problem. It is at such moments that these people get their inspirations and contact with what they are seeking, provided, of course, they have mastered the technique and their mind is fully concentrated. It is the disappearance of self-consciousness which somehow opens the door to a new world which they cannot enter normally.

Something similar though at a much higher level takes place when Dhyāna passes into Samādhi and the gate which leads into the world of realities opens. Patanjali calls this disappearance of the mind's awareness of itself as Svarūpa sūnyam iva. 'The mind's "own-form" or essential nature disappears, as it were.' Let us examine this phrase carefully because each word in it is significant. What is Svarūpa? Everything in manifestation has two forms. An external form expressing its superficial and non-essential nature which is called Rūpa and an internal form which constitutes the very essence or substance of its true nature which is called its Svarūpa. In the case of the mind in the state of Dhyāna the Rūpa is the Pratyaya or the object of meditation. It is through this that the mind finds expression. The Svarūpa is the residual consciousness of its own action or role in the process of Dhyāna and is essentially the subjective nature of the mind. This consciousness steadily becomes weaker as Dhāraṇā passes into Dhyāna and the concentration of the mind in Dhyāna increases. But still it is present,

even though in a weak form, in all stages of Dhyāna, and it is only when it disappears completely that Dhyāna passes into Samādhi.

The word Sūnyam means a void or cipher and here it must be interpreted as cipher, because it is a question of reducing the residual self-awareness to the vanishing point and not of emptying anything to the utmost limit. In fact, as the objects of meditation continue to fill the mind completely there can be no question of emptying the mind. Svarūpa Sūnyam therefore means reducing the self-awareness or the subjective role of the mind to the utmost limit. Lest the student may imagine that the Svarūpa really disappears when the Samādhi takes the place of Dhyāna the author adds the word Iva which means 'as if'. The svarūpa only seems to disappear but does not in reality because when the Samādhi comes to an end it manifests again immediately.

The question as to how it is possible to know the innermost nature of an object of meditation by fusing the mind with it is a very interesting one and has been dealt with fully in considering I-41. It will suffice to point out here that the apparent disappearance of the self-awareness means really dissolution of the subject-object relationship and their fusion in consciousness. With the disappearance of the mental Svarūpa a faculty higher than the intellect comes in

play, and the perception of the reality hidden behind the object takes place through the instrumentality of this faculty which perceives by becoming one with the object of perception. The perceiver, the object of perception and perception become fused in one state.

When the self-awareness has disappeared, what is left in the mind? Only the object of meditation can remain, for all kinds of distractions have to be eliminated before the state of Dhyāna can be firmly established. This is the meaning of the phrase Arthamātra- Nirbhāsam. The phrase Tad eva means 'the same' and is used here to emphasize the fact that Samādhi is merely an advanced phase of Dhyāna and not a new technique. The only difference between them as we have seen is the absence of the mental self-awareness which makes the object shine in a new light.

The difference between the three phases of the same process which culminates in Samādhi may be represented in the following way. If A is the object chosen for Samyama and B, C, D, E, etc. are distractions, then the content of the mind at regular intervals of successive moments in the three phases may be represented by the following series of Pratyayas present in the mind. The circle round the letters represents the mental self-awareness referred to above.

1	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)		ORDINARY THINKING
2	(A)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(A)	(C)	(A)	(A)	DHĀRANĀ
3	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(A)	(A)	
4	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	A	(A)	A	(A)	
5	(A)	A	A	A	(A)	A	A	(A)	DHYĀNA
6	A	A	A	A	A	(A)	A	(A)	
	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	(A)	
7	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	SAMĀDHI
8	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	

It will be seen that the frequency of distractions goes on decreasing in Dhāraṇā and frequency and degree of mental self-awareness goes on decreasing in Dhyāna. In Samādhi there is complete freedom both from distractions and self-awareness and the object alone remains in the field of consciousness. It is true that further changes are possible but these changes are connected with the object itself and do not affect the two conditions which determine the state of Samādhi. But these further developments have been discussed in connection with I-42-49.

It will be seen that the transformations which take place in Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi are purely mental phenomena and are related to consciousness. The mind has

already been disconnected from the body and whatever takes place in the realm of the mind cannot be judged by the condition of the body. The physiological functions go on perfectly but there is no response of the body either to the world outside or inside. This lack of response to outer stimuli in the physical body in the state of samādhi makes many people mistake ordinary trance for samādhi. But mere trance cannot be a proof of the attainment of samādhi. The body becomes unresponsive in sleep or under the influence of anaesthetics or drugs. It also becomes unresponsive when, in the case of psychics, the subtler vehicles withdraw from the physical body and consciousness begins to function in the subtler world next to the physical. In all such cases the body is inert but the lower mind is functioning partially or fully in the next subtler vehicle. It is still under the full domination of distractions as before. The mental processes leading up to samādhi take place in the lower mental body and require the quiescence of the lower vehicles. Therefore, the fact of a person being in real samādhi is determined solely by the condition of his mind and not at all by the inertness of the physical body.

It is necessary to draw attention to these obvious facts because those who are not well versed in the philosophy of Yoga and dabble in lower psychism generally confuse the inertness of the physical body with samādhi and a person who

can manage to remain unconscious for any length of time is regarded as a great Yogi! This condition of mere inertness is generally referred to as Fada-samādhi and has really no relation with true samādhi although outwardly they appear very much alike. A person who comes out of true samādhi brings with him the transcendent knowledge, wisdom, peace and strength of the inner life while a person who comes out of Fada-samādhi is no wiser than a person who comes out of sleep. Sometimes, when he is psychic he may be able to bring down into the physical brain clear or confused memory of some of his experiences on the next subtler plane but there is nothing remarkable or reliable about these experiences and certainly there is nothing in common with the transcendent knowledge which is gained in true samādhi.

#### III.4

#### Trayam ekatra samyamah.

The three taken together constitute Samyama.

It should be clear from what has been said previously in dealing with Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi that these are really different phases of the same mental process, each succeeding stage differing from the preceding in the depth of concentration which has been attained and the more complete

isolation of the object of contemplation from distractions. The complete process beginning with Dhāraṇā and ending in samādhi is called Samyama in Yogic terminology and the practical mastery of its technique opens the door not only to knowledge of all kinds but also to powers and superphysical accomplishments known as Siddhis.

It is necessary to keep in mind two facts about Samyama. First, it is a continuous process and the passage from one stage to another is not marked by any abrupt change in consciousness. Secondly, the time taken in reaching the last stage depends entirely upon the progress made by the Yogi. The beginner may have to spend hours and days in reaching the final stage while the Adept can pass into it almost instantaneously and effortlessly. As Samādhi does not involve any movement in space but merely sinking, as it were, towards the centre of one's own consciousness, time is not an essential factor in the process. The time taken by the Yogi is due entirely to the lack of mastery of the technique.

I.17 Vitarka-vicārānandāsmītānugamāt samprajñātaḥ.

Samprajñāta Samādhi is that which is accompanied by reasoning, reflection, bliss and sense of pure being.

Samādhi may be defined generally as a process of diving into the deeper layers of one's consciousness which functions through different grades of the mind. Consciousness is an aspect of the Ultimate Reality in manifestation and its expression depends upon the particular grade of the mind through which it is functioning, the coarser the medium the more limited the expression. As the progressive involution of consciousness in matter for the purpose of its unfoldment imposes upon it increasing limitations, so the reverse process of evolution progressively releases consciousness from these limitations. The different stages of Samādhi represent this progressive release of consciousness from the limitations in which it is involved and Kaivalya is that state in which it can again function in perfect freedom.

As consciousness functions at different levels in different grades of the mind through different mechanisms which are called vehicles or Kosas its progressive release from limitations may be looked at from another point of view. It may be considered as its withdrawal from one vehicle into a subtler vehicle. Each vehicle has its own functions and limitations but the functions become more inclusive and the limitations more tenuous as the matter of which it is composed becomes more refined. This progressive withdrawal of consciousness in Samādhi into increasingly subtler



vehicles is represented in the diagram showing 'Stages of samādhi'. The diagram is self-explanatory but can be understood fully only when the different aspects of samādhi have been studied in detail.

The first aspect of samādhi with which Patanjali deals in the first Section is the distinction between samprajñāta and Asamprajñāta samādhi. There is a lot of misunderstanding with regard to the nature of these two kinds of samādhi and many students confuse them with sabīja and Nirbīja samādhi. In fact the words used for different kinds of samādhis are generally used by commentators in a haphazard manner and the subtler distinctions which characterize the different kinds and phases of samādhi are frequently overlooked. A student of the Yoga-Sūtras should bear in mind that this is a scientific treatise in which each word has a specific and definite meaning and there is no possibility of looseness of expression or the use of alternate words for the same idea. When Patanjali uses two pairs of words -- samprajñāta and Asamprajñāta on the one hand and sabīja and Nirbīja on the other -- in entirely different contexts it is because he is dealing with two entirely different ideas or subjects and to take these two pairs of words as if they mean the same thing shows lack of comprehension of the whole subject. We shall discuss later the significance of sabīja and Nirbīja samādhis. Let us first try to understand

what Samprajnāta and Asamprajnāta Samādhis mean.

As frequently happens in the use of Saṃskṛta words the clue to the meaning of a particular word is given by the etymological structure of the word. Samprajnāta Samādhi means 'Samādhi with Prajnā'. The prefix A in Saṃskṛta means 'not' and therefore Asamprajnāta Samādhi means 'not the Samādhi without Prajnā, which would be the opposite of Samprajnāta Samādhi. It is a state of Samādhi which, though associated with Prajnā, is yet different from Samprajnāta Samādhi. It may therefore be considered a correlative of Samprajnāta Samādhi. The word Prajnā in Saṃskṛta stands for the higher consciousness working through the mind in all its stages. It is derived from Pra which means high and Jnā which means to 'know'. The distinctive characteristic of this higher consciousness which unfolds in Samādhi is that the mind is cut off completely from the physical world and the consciousness is centred in one or the other of the set of vehicles beginning with the lower mental body and ending with the Ātmic vehicle. The consciousness is thus free from the burden and interference of the physical brain.

If both Samprajnāta and Asamprajnāta Samādhi are associated with Prajna (Samprajna) where lies the difference between the two? The difference lies in the presence or absence of a Pratyaya in the field of consciousness. Pratyaya

is a technical word used in Yoga to denote the total content of the mind at any moment using the word mind in its widest sense and not merely the intellect. This Pratyaya may be of any kind and may exist on any plane of the mind. A mental image of a child, a concept of a mathematical principle, an all-embracing vision of the Unity of life are all Pratyayas of different kinds and belonging to different planes.

Now, in Samprajnāta Samādhi there is a Pratyaya (which is called a 'seed') in the field of consciousness and the consciousness is fully directed to it. So the direction of consciousness is from the centre outwards. In Asamprajnāta Samādhi there is no Pratyaya and therefore there is nothing to draw the consciousness outwards and hold it there. So as soon as the Pratyaya (P) is dropped or suppressed the consciousness begins to recede automatically to its centre O and after passing momentarily through this Laya centre, tends to emerge into the next subtler vehicle. When this process has been completed the Pratyaya (P') of the next higher plane appears and the direction of consciousness again becomes from the centre outwards. The progressive stages of the recession of consciousness to its centre and its emergence into the next higher plane may be illustrated by the following diagram:

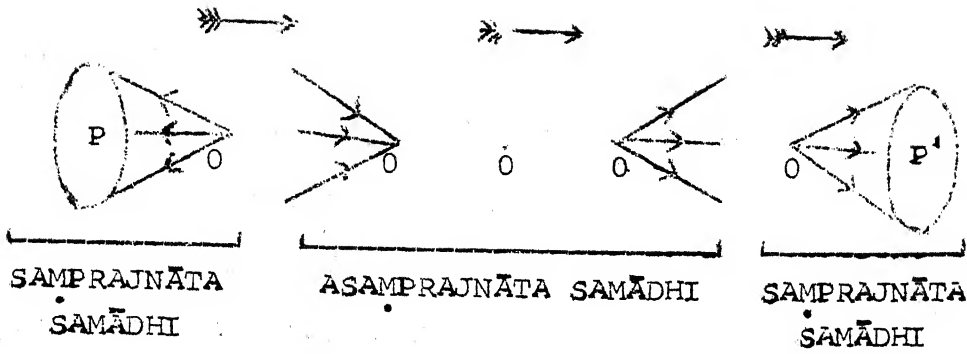


FIG. 1

From the time the Pratyaya P is suppressed to the time when the Pratyaya P' of the next plane appears the Yogi is in the stage of Asamprajñāta Samādhi. During all this time he is fully conscious and his will is directing this delicate mental operation in a very subtle manner. The mind is no doubt blank but it is the blankness of Samādhi and not the blankness of an ordinary kind such as is present in deep sleep or coma. The mind is still completely cut off from the outer world, is still perfectly concentrated, is still under complete control of the will. Asamprajñāta Samādhi therefore represents a very dynamic condition of the mind and differs from Samprajñāta Samādhi only in the absence of Pratyaya in the field of consciousness. In intensity of concentration and alertness of the mind it is on a par with Samprajñāta Samādhi. That is why it is denoted by merely adding the prefix A to Samprajñāta Samādhi.

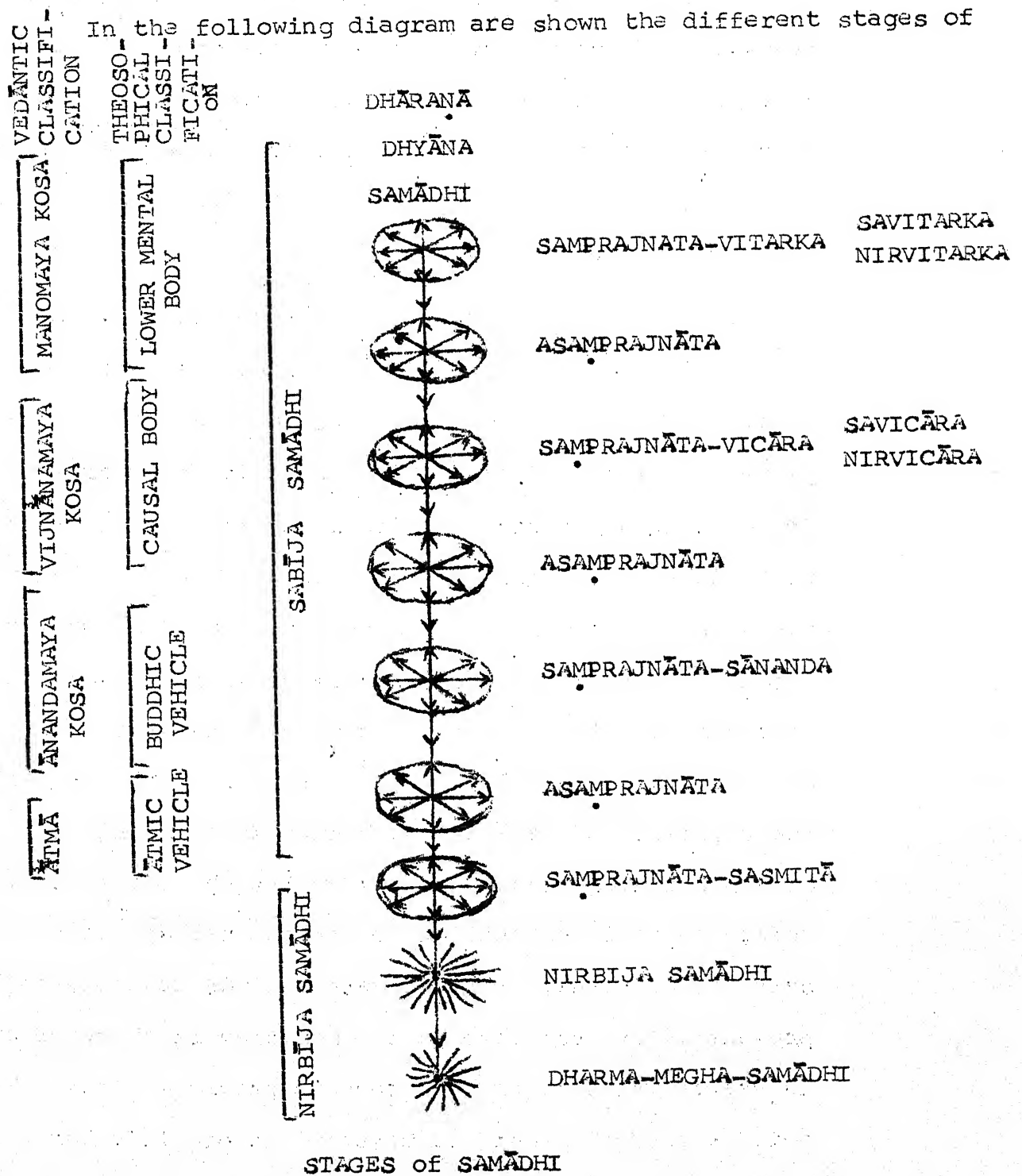
The void of Asamprajnāta samādhi is sometimes called a 'cloud' in Yogic terminology and the experience may be compared to that of a pilot whose aeroplane passes through a cloud bank. The clear landscape is blotted out suddenly, the ordinary sense of direction disappears and he flies on in the certainty that if he holds on he is bound to come out again into the clear sky. When the consciousness of the Yogi leaves one plane and the Pratyaya of that plane disappears he finds himself in a void and must remain in that void until his consciousness automatically emerges into the next plane with its new and characteristic Pratyaya. He cannot do anything but wait patiently, with mind concentrated and alert, for the darkness to disperse and the light of the higher plane to dawn in his mind. In the case of the advanced Yogi this experience can be repeated over and over again and he passes from one plane to another until he takes the final plunge from the subtlest plane (the Ātmic plane) into Reality itself—the consciousness of the Puruṣa. The 'cloud' which he now enters is called Dharma Megha for reasons discussed in dealing with IV-29. When he comes out of this sacred 'cloud' he has already left behind the realm of Prakṛti and is in his own Svarūpa.

It will be seen, therefore, that in the progressive recession of consciousness from the lower mental plane to its origin Samprajnāta samādhi with its characteristic Pratyaya

and Asamprajnāta Samādhi with its void follow each other in succession until the last hurdle has been crossed and the Yogi is established in his Svarūpa and his consciousness has become one with the consciousness of the Puruṣa. The recession of consciousness towards its centre is thus not a steady and uninterrupted sinking into greater and greater depths but consists in this alternate outward and inward movement of consciousness at each barrier separating the two planes.

The time taken for passage through the different planes and the intervening voids depends upon the advancement of the Yogi. While the beginner may remain entangled on the lower planes for a considerable time extending to years, the advanced Yogi can transfer his consciousness from one plane to another with lightning rapidity, and in the case of the Adept who has attained Kaivalya all the planes really merge into one because the passage up or down is so swift and easy that it is merely a question of focussing consciousness in one vehicle or another. As a rule, when the Yogi is still learning the technique of Samādhi he has to spend considerable time on a particular plane in studying its phenomena and laws before he is in a position to attempt passage into the next higher plane. His progress depends not only on his present effort but also on the momentum of the past and the saṃskāras which he brings from his previous lives. The Science of Yoga cannot be mastered in one life but only in a

succession of strenuous lives devoted exclusively to the Yogic ideal. And those who are impatient and cannot adopt this long term view are not yet qualified to enter this path and make steady progress towards their goal.



Samprajñāta and Asamprajñāta samādhi as well as their correspondences to the different vehicles and other aspects of the question involved in our study. It will be seen that samprajñāta samādhi begins when the consciousness is completely cut off from the outer world after passing through the two preliminary stages of Dhāraṇa and Dhyāna. In the first stage of samprajñāta samādhi the consciousness is therefore centred in the lower mental world and functions through the Manomaya Kosa. The essential function of the mind in this stage is denoted by the word Vitarka. It should be noted that when a person can leave the physical body and function in the two subtler vehicles called astral or lower mental body he is not necessarily in a state of samādhi though his physical body is in an inert condition. He may be merely functioning in these subtler bodies in the ordinary manner exercising his clairvoyant powers and bringing down the knowledge he has gained into the physical brain when he returns to the physical body. This state in which clairvoyance, etc. can be exercised is quite different from the state of samādhi because the peculiar condition of the mind described in III-3 is not present. The mind is directed to different objects in succession and is not concentrated upon one object.

After mastering the technique of Savitarka and Nirvitarka phases in the first stage the Yogi practises Asamprajñāta



samādhi and withdraws his consciousness into the next higher plane, passing through the 'cloud' which accompanies Asamprajnāta Samādhi. The consciousness of the Yogi then emerges into the higher mental world and functions through the Vijnānamaya Kosa or the causal body. The essential function of the mind working through this vehicle is called Vicāra. The Yogi now starts practising samādhi on this plane, slowly masters the technique of the Savicāra and Nirvicāra phases and again practises Asamprajnāta Samādhi to free his consciousness from the higher mental plane. The whole cyclic process has to be repeated twice again during the last two stages of Samprajnāta Samādhi in order to release the consciousness of the Yogi from the extremely subtle and hardly comprehensible vehicles which are called the Ānandamaya Kosa and Ātmā and whose essential functions are called Ānanda and Asmitā. The significance of the words Vitarka, Vicāra, and Asmitā is explained in dealing with the four stages of the Gunas in II-19 and the student should refer to that sūtra in this connection.

The student should also note that throughout the recession of consciousness in the four stages there is always something in the field of consciousness. It is true that during the period of Asamprajnāta samādhi there is no Pratyaya but only a 'cloud' or void but a 'cloud' or void is

also a cover on pure consciousness. It is only the blurred impression produced in consciousness when it passes through the critical phase between the Pratyaya of two successive planes. This phase is like the critical state between two states of matter, liquid and gaseous, when it can be called neither liquid nor gaseous. So this presence of a Pratyaya which is characteristic of all stages of Samprajnāta Samādhi means that in Samprajnāta Samādhi consciousness can only know the nature of something which is placed within its field of illumination. It cannot know its own nature. If we pass a beam of light through a dark chamber and then place in the path of the beam different kinds of objects the light will immediately illuminate those objects and enable us to see them. The objects are seen with the help of the light but we cannot see the light itself, for if all the objects are removed from the path of the beam of light the chamber will become quite dark although the beam of light is still there. Is there a means of seeing the light itself? There is no means of seeing physical light apart from the objects which it illuminates. But the light of consciousness can be seen as it really is after all the stages of Samprajnāta Samādhi have been passed and Nirbīja Samādhi is practised to remove the final and the subtlest veil covering Reality, the consciousness of the Puruṣa.

We have been referring to the Pratyayas of the different planes and the student might like to know what these Pratyayas are like. Although efforts have been made to describe the glorious and vivid Pratyayas of the higher planes by mystics and occultists in all ages those who read these descriptions can see that these efforts are a failure, the higher the plane which is sought to be depicted the more complete the failure. The fact is that it is impossible to have any idea of these higher planes except in the most general and vaguest manner. Each world can be known only through the vehicle which consciousness uses in that world. The successive descent of consciousness into the lower worlds is not like a progressive and general dimming of a brilliant light by a number of covers. Each successive descent involves a decrease in the number of dimensions of space and time and this imposes at each step additional limitations on consciousness which are inherent in the working of that plane.

## Chapter Five

### JNĀNA YOGA

Jnāna Yoga takes for its point of departure the view that the root cause of our suffering, limitation, and bondage lies in ignorance of the **true** nature of the world and indeed of our own self because the dispelling of ignorance about one's own true identity also dispels the ignorance about the world. In his true nature man is no other than Brahman Himself: Jivah Brahma eva naparah , ever full, self-existent, Being, Consciousness and Bliss. In the depths of his being there exist even in the stage of ignorance and fragmented living, an intimation, however vague, of this truth. That is why he cannot accept a life of only partial joy, partial freedom, beset by various frailties and limitations however human he may call them, as natural to him. Somewhere deep down he knows that limitation and suffering are unnatural, adventitious to him, an aberration which he has to remove. Jnāna-mārga says that this is indeed so and the removal of suffering requires nothing other than gaining of Gnosis or true knowledge. Swāmī Rāma Tirtha used to give the parable of a tiger-cub who grew up amongst sheep. It so happened that once a tigress fell upon a flock of sheep and as she was pregnant, the effort proved too much for her. Giving birth to a cub, the tigress passed away. Thus the tiger cub came to grow up with the sheep

and not knowing any better thought of himself as a sheep. So, even though much against his grain, he would nibble at the grass and suffer the fears and insecurities of the sheep. Now it so happened that at one time, a full-grown tiger attacked this flock of sheep for a prey. Even as he caught hold of a sheep and was about to turn away, he chanced to see this strange spectacle of a tiger-cub running along with the sheep, cowering and full of fear. He approached this cub and demanded of him an explanation for his strange behavior. But the cub did not understand and the full grown tiger had to give him a practical lesson to make him realize who he was. To cut it short, he dragged the shivering and unwilling tiger cub to a pond nearby, told him that he was a tiger and not a sheep, showed him his reflection in the pond, forced some raw meat down into his throat, and roared until the cub also gave up his false sense of sheepiness and realizing his tiger-identity roared as befits a tiger. It is a matter of realization of that which is, always was the case: he never, in fact, was a sheep, nor ever he became one even when in ignorance. Only the ignorance, the veiling of his true nature made him live a life of fear and limitations. Man never becomes other than Brahman, his sat, chit, ānanda nature never departs from him, the realization of his true nature adds

nothing to him. Once the true knowledge dawns, bondage, suffering, the world, and even liberation, all are seen as having only a phenomenal existence.

How is the ignorance of one's own nature to be removed and Self-knowledge gained? The path of knowledge, lays emphasis on the intellect: sharp and refined. By a proper use of the discriminative power of a refined and pure intellect ground may be prepared for the dawning of the great knowledge.

One approach lies in making a steadfast and thorough distinction between the subject and the object: ātma- anātmaviveka. The self is the essential subject: pure subject - we can never conceive of it as an object. As such all that is or can be experienced, can be presented as an object to consciousness or the subject, must be cast out of the realm of the subject or Self. Otherwise we would be committing the fallacy of confusing the distinct categories of subject and object. On the other hand, we can never think of the subject as an object, else we would then be required to posit another subject to whom this is given as an object, and the self being the subject would then again be this subject and not the object. Following this line of investigation, we can set aside as not-self all that can be treated as object — all that falls in the realm of Dr̥ṣya.

The objects of the external world are obviously part of this realm: but what about the body, mind, thoughts, feelings, emotions etc? We become aware of the body, and of the various forms that the mind-stuff takes. The *vyrttis* of the mind are 'the seen', things we become ware of, they cannot be taken to be the subject. Pursuing this path of discrimination between the subject and the object, we arrive at Pure subject: by its very nature it has no definite characteristics: it is not a thing, what can we say about that which is of the essence of Pure subject alone and has no 'object' elements in it? For descriptions can be given only of the objective. The Self is thus indescribable, ineffable and is never experienced as a thing or object other than the experiencer. It cannot then be 'known' in the ordinary sense of the word: but only 'realized' by the investigator by a process of discrimination from the non-self and identity with Pure essence of subjectivity.

The process of discrimination and thus purification of beliefs about self-identity may also be approached from the point of view of sat and asat. 'I am' pervades all our experience. No body ever experiences 'I am not'. The subject is not only the witness of the world of objects, it is also the abiding substratum, the changeless One in the world of changing many. The theatre of consciousness is

ever in motion: different characters make their appearance, occupy the stage for a while and then make their exit.

All this is subject to change and is in time: but all this is apprehended, including the movement of time. So there must be that which is beyond change, and outside time. This is 'sat', the is- in the world of becoming: subtle and

no-thing, but without which all will come to nought. The

inquiry into the nature of Self: 'who am I?' may proceed

along these lines. The world of objects is in a flux, that

I am not, the body, the breath, the many sensations -

all changing and transient: asat. There are the many

moods of the mind, the varied hues of emotions and

sentiments, the pangs of anxiety and fear, the golden

stirrings of hope and ambition, the winces of pain and

remorse, the sorrow of loss, the grief of powerlessness, and

so on: but all are asat: they come, show their face and

they go. Their countenance is different: some create

exuberance and love, others fear and repulsion, but they

all pass away - for they are all asat, and therefore anātma.

The Self, the ātman, the I is the abiding witness: the

colourless screen on which are played different audio-video,

feelies, different stories, different sequences: the

consciousness-space in which all events occur, the silent,

Just Is-Awareness by which are all things and events

illumined — The inquirer discriminates between Sat and



asat and rejects the events that makes up the psycho-physical organism as not-self, and moves forward towards knowledge of the true self.

Jñāna marga is a path of liberation, and inquiry into the nature of the Self that we have spoken of above, aims at not mere intellectual satisfaction but deliverance from suffering, transformation and attainment of bliss. For the inquiry to produce these results, certain pre-requisites have been set forth. In the absence of these, there is only intellectual reasoning and even satisfaction of the mind, but no transformation and no deliverance. Life goes on as before: and the problem of suffering and limitation remains unresolved. Not just intellectual conviction but a direct, non-mediated intuitive certainty, an indubitable actual experience of the truth of the Self is called for, and that requires a preparation. In the vedāntic discourse this preparatory discipline has been described as Sādhana- Catuṣṭaya, the four-fold discipline. It includes cultivation of moral and personal qualities such as Śama, dama, uparati, titikṣa, śraddhā and samādāna, an intense desire for freedom (Mumukṣatva), detachment from pleasures of senses and a capacity to discriminate between the permanent and the transient. There must be an intense yearning for liberation, and the inquirer must have purged

his mind and heart of desires for worldly objects. Normally such a yearning and such a detachment comes after a man has experienced the transitory and unfulfilling nature of the pleasures and concerns of the world, and the misery and bondage of ordinary existence. Then hearing that, this miserable existence that is the worldly and that is regarded as normal, is not the only mode of living available to us; that the great sādhakas have, in the past lived a different life - a life of ecstasy; and that such a life of ecstasy and perfection is available to us; he gets interested in exploration of sādhanā. If his detachment persists and his impatience with suffering stays, he engages in discipline of the sādha in the guidance of a teacher, a guru. And so he becomes adhikārī, fit for receiving the highest knowledge as to who he truly. The revelation that 'I am Brahman', He Himself is no different from the Ever Existent Source of Life, Being and Bliss, immediately transforms his life. Though many hold that just by 'hearing'

(Śravaṇ) the great statement that propounds the identity of the Self with the Brahman, brings to the adhikārī realization, more commonly, manan, (meditation) on the great truth revealed by the great statement and contemplation (nidhidyāsana) on it are also necessary for the arising of that non-mediated direct, realization of the Ever blissful nature of the Self.

Ādi Śāṅkara's Vākya Vṛtti contains in a very brief and cogent form the essentials of jñāna mārga. I have selected below parts of this text with Swāmī Chinmayānanda's translation and commentary. This short text was written by Achārya for & students who had already cultivated in themselves the necessary inner purification to take-off into contemplative flights.

Through devotion and dedicated service of the world around, when the inner psychological extrovertedness gets curbed, the mind gets surcharged with its own dynamism. Such an alert and quiet mind manifests its contemplative faculties, and to such a contemplative student Śāṅkara is prescribing the direction of his take-off.

The grace of the scriptures and the masters can not only guide and lead us when we are confused, but support us enroute when we are weary and tired, and remove all obstacles, to make it a pleasant pilgrimage to the Higher, the Timeless and therefore, changeless, birthless, deathless, undecaying, eternal, immortal, imperishable, etc. A purified mind, at its seat of meditation, rides along these thoughts in the early states of Contemplation, and when it gets soaked with these thoughts, it gathers greater meditative poise and in those moments of inner peace and knowledge the mind disappears into the vision--the Infinite, the Non-dual Brahman.

3. Scorched by the blazing sun of the three miseries,  
a student--dejected with the world and restless for  
release, having cultivated all the means of liberation  
--especially such virtues as self-control etc--enquires  
of a noble teacher:
4. "Merely out of your grace and mercy, holy Teacher,  
please explain to me briefly the means by which I may  
easily get liberated from the sorrows of this bondage-  
to-change".
5. The Teacher said:  
  
"Your question is valid, and so very clearly expressed.  
I shall answer it exhaustively to make it as vivid to  
you as though you are seeing it near".
6. Direct knowledge of that total identity between the  
individual-Self and the Universal-Self, stemming forth  
from the Vedic statements such as "Thou art that", etc.,  
is the immediate means to liberation.

The disciple said:

7. "What is the individualized Self? What, then, is the Universal Self? How can they both be identical? And, how can statements like "That thou art" discuss and prove this identity?"

Here is a statement, "That thou art". The pronoun 'that' is often used for something far away, and the word 'you' (thou) is again a second person pronoun. How can the statement indicate any identity between two pronouns--one a second-person pronoun and another a third-person pronoun?

The statement when declared, I do hear; but it does not speak to me. How can such a statement discuss and prove, to my personal understanding this identity?

The teacher said:

8. I shall answer your question. Who else can be the individual self (jiva) other than yourself, that asks me this question, "Who am I?". There is no doubt about it. You alone are the Brahman.

You yourself--who expresses this doubt, and asks me "Who am I?"--in essence, you yourself are Brahman.

The doubt rose as a disturbance in your rational thinking. The Consciousness in you illumined this doubt. Then you communicated to me that doubt, which you became conscious of, with your words, "Who am I?". If this Consciousness were not there in you, you would not have been aware of the doubt, and so there would have been no doubter in you. This Consciousness in you that illumines your doubts is the One Consciousness which is in all bosoms, illumining their specific thought disturbances. Naturally, therefore, the teacher, who is so well-rooted in this sense of identity with the Supreme Consciousness, directly answers his disciple that the questioner himself is Brahman.

The disciple said:

9. Not even the word meaning do I fully grasp clearly; how can I then comprehend the significance of the sentence, "I am Brahman"?

The student is seeking more and more explanations in his attempt at a deeper enquiry in this dialogue between the teacher and the taught. The sympathetic teacher gets a glimpse of the quality of the student and, accordingly, the teacher elaborates his explanations. A true teacher is never tired of helping his students.

11. "Why do you not recognize your own Self, which is an embodiment of Eternal Bliss-Essence, the Witnessing Light that illumines the inner equipments and their functions?"

The outer equipments-of-experiences are the instruments of perceptions and the instruments of action, and, as a contrast to these, Vedanta indicates the mind-intellect equipment in us, by the appellation, "inner instruments". All experiences in life are gained by the vigorous functioning of these subtle inner instruments through the grosser outer equipments. Therefore, we are apt to misunderstand that the individuality in us is the mind-intellect equipment. And, it is logical too; when they function, there is the individuality, and when they do not function, as in deep-sleep, or under chloroform, the individuality is absent in us. Therefore one can conclude that the complex of "inner equipments" constitutes the sense of individuality in him.

Yet, if we subtly observe, we shall find that all the functions of the mind-intellect are awared by a subtler Essence in us. This Consciousness that illumines for us all the functions of our inner equipments, Itself remains as an uninvolved Witness of all the modifications of the mind. The Consciousness thus apparently caught in the web of our inner modifications becomes our ego-sense, the dynamic "entity"

in us. This individuality is in Vedanta known as the "jiva"--the Ego in us.

Whose are these outer and inner equipments? In thoughtless hurry, we have concluded that we are the mind and intellect, the doer-enjoyer-individual. This ego is, in essence, the Consciousness, witnessing, illumining, knowing all the activities of both the outer and the inner equipments. That Witness alone can be you. This Witness is not only a mass of Consciousness, but also at once a state of Pure Bliss. Even in our outer worldly sensuous pleasures, the sense objects only quieten our mind when the joy, which is the very nature of the Self, floods into our experience. The stormy restlessness in a bosom, caused by its impatient desires, when suddenly calmed at the fulfillment of the desire, there is an explosive experience of Bliss. But again that happiness is veiled away by the rise of fresh waves of disturbances created by another set of desires.

Consciousness (Chaitanya) and Bliss (Ananda) are not two qualities (Visesh) of the Self. They are of the very essence (Dharma) of the Self; as light is the sun, heat is the fire, sweetness is the sugar.

Apart from Consciousness (Chit) and Bliss (Anand) Self is also Existence Eternal (Satya). That which remains the same, changeless in all the three periods of time, past-present-and-



future, is called Satya, the Real. Our experiences change, Our equipment of experiences--body-mind-intellect--undergo modifications. The fields of experiences--objects-emotions-thoughts--keep on changing themselves. And they, in their continuous dance among themselves form and re-form into endless patterns of situations, and provide every living being with fresh challenges and new situations all the time. However, all along, the vital Consciousness, that illumines them all, is the same Truth, which is Immutable and Permanent--Satya.

Thus, the real Essence behind the "Witness", the jivatma, is the Self, and this is indicated by the triple-word idiom used here, "Consciousness-Bliss-Truth" (Chaitanya-Ananda-Satya). Here, these three are not three different aspects, but all of them indicate the one Essence which expresses as Existence or as Knowledge or as Bliss in different equipments.

This Self is the Essential Being in you, and yet, how is it that you are not able to experience it? Why don't you come to know your own Self? Is it so difficult? You are father to your children, husband to your wife, and son to your father. Is it, then, difficult for you to realize you who are playing as the father, husband, and son?

Yet, it is so difficult for the students to discover the self. This can only be due to some long-standing, mysterious inner confusion, a deep-seated, corroding self-delusion, a tragic and blinding ignorance.

There must be a way to remove the confusion, to escape the delusion, and to drive away the ignorance. That technique is now being pointed out by the teacher in the following verse.

12. "Give up the intellectual misconception that the Self is the body, etc., and always meditate upon and think yourself to be the eternal Knowledge-Bliss--the witness of the intellect--a sheer mass of Pure Knowledge."

"As we think, so we become." The present attitude of the mind and the values in the intellect are determined by the quality of our past thoughts. Thought by thought, in the past, we have programmed our mind to behave as it does today in us. If not, we think that we are only the body-mind, and we have, therefore, only such values that we respect which can bring our physical pleasures and material comforts. We have come to recognize ourselves as a limited ego, Jivatma. Our vision of life becomes limited and, naturally, our values selfish and sensuous.

When this "preoccupation with the not-Self" (anatma chintan) gets replaced by "thoughts of the Self" (Atma chintan), in time, the spiritual ignorance in the individual ends, and the pure-Self reveals Itself and is spiritually apprehended.

Hence the cry in all our scriptures for continued and regular meditation upon the Self.

13. "The body is not the Self, as like the pot, etc. the body also has form, etc., and again, the body is a modification of the great elements such as Akash, just like the pot."

The body is, like the pot, a product of the five great elements, essentially a product of matter. A body has birth, growth, decay, and death; it is ever-changing and undergoes itself constant modifications. The body is an object of our perception. Due to the above reasons, the body, like any piece of furniture, is a material object, belonging to the category of not-Self (Anatma).

The body, an "object" of Consciousness, can never be the Self, the very Consciousness.

The teacher said:

15. "Just as the perceiver of a pot is ever distinctly different from the pot and can never be the pot--so too, you, the perceiver of your body, are distinct from your body and can never be the body--this you firmly ascertain in yourself."

When you see an object, certainly you, the seer, are always distinctly different from the object seen. Your body is perceived by you; it is the seen. Therefore, you, the seer of your body, are certainly separate from the body. Let us first of all well ascertain this in our understanding. Again, we claim that the body is ours. In fact, one can never be what one owns. The body is the possessed and you are the possessor. I can't be my dog; the dog belongs to me; I am its owner--the sole proprietor of my dog. Thus, the body is not you--although the body is yours. You are something other than the body, who is the owner, proprietor, master of the body. Again and again assert this truth and come to change your attitude towards your body and re-establish your right relationship to the world of objects contacted and experienced through the body.

When, by this process, the body-identification ceases to be, the spiritual ignorance (avidya) to that extent gets eliminated.

16. "Similarly, be sure in yourself that you, the seer of the senses, are not the senses themselves, and ascertain that you are neither the mind, not the intellect, not the vital air (prana)."

After explaining to the student that he is not the gross-body, in this verse he is made to understand that he cannot be the subtle-body also. The sense faculties of perceptions and actions (indriyas), vital air (prana), mind, and intellect together constitute the subtle-body, and without them, the outer gross sense-organs and the body cannot function. This subtle-body is also made up of the subtle aspects of the five great elements and, as such, it also falls under the categories of matter (anatma).

Again, that we have sense faculties, prana, mind, intellect, etc., is constantly known by us as we are conscious of them and their functions. The knower can never be the known.

We can "see" the condition of our prana, the nature of our mind, the state of our intellect, etc. The one who sees the subtle-body and becomes aware of its changing moods and evaluates the qualities of its performances, must necessarily be someone other than the subtle-body. The advice to the Vedantic student is that he, through independent analysis and careful arguments, must teach himself to gain a growing conviction in himself that he is the "seer" of his subtle-body. Surely, therefore, he is something other than the subtle-body; because the "seer" cannot be the seen.

Ascertain, "I am the Lord of the sense-organs, pranas, mind, intellect, etc. I take work out of them. I am not

myself the subtle-body, but I am the knower of the nature and quality of performance of the various limbs of my subtle-body."

When the mind receives sense stimuli through the sense-organs, it is known by the discriminative intellect. The intellect's judgment upon them and the exact responses they have ordered are also again "known" by me. Thus I, who am the "knower" of the intellect, must necessarily be something other than the intellect and all other instruments that have helped the intellect to come to its moment-to-moment judgements.

17. "Similarly be sure that you are not the complex of the gross and the subtle-bodies, and intelligently determine, by inference, that you, the 'seer', are entirely distinct from the 'seen'."

If this gross-body, with its sense organs of perception and action, and the subtle-body, with its mind and intellect, are not the Self, may be the Atman is a combination of all these, functioning at once as a complex (sanghatha). Even though each of them has been already analysed and found as belonging to the realm of matter (anatma), together when they function, they may be producing this new aspect, recognised as the Consciousness. For example: each thread

or fiber may have no strength, but when many of them are spun together and twisted into a rope, it can gain a formidable strength and an admirable efficiency which were not there in the initial fiber or thread.

This should be intelligently inferred. Here the inference is to be--the complex of the bodies, gross and subtle, being seen, cannot be the seer, as the seen is ever distinctly different from the seer-- as a pot seen is different from the seer of the pot. Thus, with your discriminative intellect, very intelligently ascertain in yourself that the gross-subtle-complex in you also is but the not-Self (Anatma).

18. "'I am He,' the One because of whose presence alone the inert entities like the body and the senses, are able to function through acceptance and rejection."

Just as the world of beings--plant, animal, and human--draws all its energies from the sun, and yet each is free to act according to its own inclinations, so, too, in the presence of the Supreme Consciousness, the body, mind, and intellect get charged with sentiency and dynamism, and they have thereafter, total freedom to act as they like fulfilling the available vasanas in the individual. The anatma realm seems to bask in the spiritual presence of the Self and, enlivened by this majestic Presence, matter-equipments dash out to strive, to function, to achieve, each in their own respective fields.

19. "'I am He', the One Changeless, Innermost Self that moves the intellect, etc. as a magnet does the iron filings."

The Self is changeless (nirvikara). Yet, in Its mere presence, the intellect, etc. gets enlivened to activity, and they do act always according to their own natural inclinations. This is, insists the teacher, "something like the play of the iron filings in the mere presence of a magnet" (Aya-skaandh). The magnet piece is in no way affected, although the iron-filings are visibly made to behave in a given pattern.

21. "He am I', the One Consciousness, which is the Self that illumines the modifications in my mind such as 'my mind went elsewhere, however, it has been brought to rest now,'---'He am I' (So 'Ham)."

Just as the sense-organs are the knower of the sense-objects; the mind is the knower of the senses; the intellect is the knower of the mind. Then, who is the illuminator of the intellect? This is brought out very clearly in the following verse.



22. "He am I, the One ConSCiousness which is the Changeless Self that is directly cognized, that illumines the three states of waking, dream, and deep-sleep, and that which illumines appearance and disappearance of the intellect and its functions--- 'He am I' (So 'ham)."

The One ConSCiousness in us illumines all experiences (bhav) in our waking, dream, and deep-sleep states. The play of ConSCiousness is un-broken and continuous---all experiences, in the waking and dream states and also "the absence of experiences" in the deep-sleep-state, are all illumined by the one Light of ConSCiousness in us.

This seat of the ever-bright, ever-shining ConSCiousness, is the Self. It is in the presence of this Self that one "knows" the appearance of thoughts in the waking and dream states, and the disappearance of thoughts, in sleep, swooning, etc., in the intellect. "He am I" (So'ham).

Just as the light of a lamp is not affected by what it illumines, so too the ConSCiousness, the Self, is never affected by the fluctuations of the intellect, by the roamings of the mind, or by the tireless wanderings of the senses. The One Self illumines all the activities of all equipments, in every living being, all through their waking and dream states. The same Self illumines the "disappearance"

of all perceptions, in all intellects, in the deep-sleep state. "This One 'Changeless' (nirvikara) mass of Consciousness, the Self, am I (So'ham)"---thus, sincerely assert and come to realize it.

26. "The Consciousness, the Self, which appears as the Witness, is that which is meant by the word 'thou'. Being free from all changes even the witnessing is nothing but the illumining-power of the Self."

Ordinary man fails to understand that the Self in its essential nature is nothing but "Knowledge-without-objects" (Gyana swaroopa).

It is only as a result of our spiritual study, when we deeply reflect upon the great statements (Mahavakyas) that we get a glimpse of this significance. The term "thou", in the statement "That thou art", in a relative sense, is understood as the individualised Self, the Jiva. But in its deepest import the term "thou" points to the Essential Self, Pure Knowledge (Gyana Swaroopa). The Consciousness, the Self, being the illuminator in all, at all times, this "Witnessing Consciousness" is called the Atman.

28. "Having thus ascertained the meaning of the term "thou" one should reflect upon what is meant by the word "that"---employing both the method of negation and also the direct method of scriptural assertion."

In order to establish firmly the essential 'indicative meaning' of the term "thou" it will be helpful if we strive to apprehend the full impact of the term "that" (Tath) in the declaration "That thou art." This term is expounded and brought to the students direct and immediate comprehension by the Upanishads, consistently employing two different techniques--the method of negation (Nishedha) of what are not really the Infinite Sub-stratum of the Universe, "that"; and also the method of assertion (Vidhi), wherein directly the scriptures have ascertained the Infinite nature of "that", the Brahman. Repeatedly a sincere student must contemplate upon the Essence behind the Universe taking advantage of both these techniques.

In the relative world of finite experiences, the term "thou" indicates the limited creature, the arrogant ego, that entertains the vanity that he is the "doer" (Karthā) and the "experiencer" (Bhokta); at this juncture, from the standpoint of the Jiva, "that" can mean only the Lord (Ishwara), who had created the world and is providing the ego with all its experiences, as ordered by the quality of his own past actions. But in the Absolute sense, the

Consciousness that is the Self (Atman) in you is the Self everywhere, the Supreme-Self, (Brahman).

The individualised-Self, the Jiva, and the Universal-Self, Ishwara, are both the expressions of the One Infinite Self (Brahman). The Ego (Jiva) and the Lord (Ishwara) are apparently different, apparently separate and indescribably distinct from each other only because of the differences in their equipment. The Self, the Supreme, expressed in Avidya is Jiva, while when the same Supreme-Self expresses in Maya becomes Ishwara. When the Avidya in us is eliminated, when the Jiva rises above its "non-apprehension and consequent mis-apprehensions", the Maya also is crossed. The essence behind the Jiva and Ishwara is apprehended then, in one blinding flash of realisation, as the one Infinite mass of Pure Consciousness.

The various Upanishadic declarations, that indicate the depth-meaning of this term, prescribe for us the lines of enquiries and investigations to be undertaken, in order to successfully reflect upon and ascertain the subtle suggestions enshrined in the pregnant-suggestions of the term "that"

34. "That which the Upanishads clearly establish as the sole object of deep contemplation for those who are sincere seekers of liberation---make sure of that Brahman in your understanding.

We have a clear indication in the Taaittiriya Upanishad of what must be the theme of contemplation for one who is anxious for the liberation of his personality, from the thralldom of his own matter vestures---body, mind, and intellect.

The Upanishad insists clearly, that we must contemplate upon, "that" from which all the perceived world of things and beings have risen, "that" in which they continue to exist, and in the end, "that" into which all merge back (in dissolution). That is the point-of-attention for all deep and continuous contemplation.

The mud is the material cause (upadhana karana) for all pots---all pots are born from mud, exist in mud and, when broken, go back to be the mud. Similarly, Brahman is shown here as the upadhana karana of the universe, for the purpose of contemplation by the limited, human mind.

By thus Contemplating upon that which is ever-present everywhere, which is the essence in every form, the seeker's entire attention gets lifted from the world of plurality and it gets settled upon the Self within. The mental agitations then cease. Thoughts end. The mind halts. The ego disappears into the vision of the Supreme---in a most direct and subjective experience-divine.

39. "what appears (anjabhi) as the Witnessing-Consciousness within, (the individual-Self), is of the nature of Bliss, One-without-a-second; and the one that is the Bliss without-a-second is none other than the individualized-Self the Witnessing Consciousness within."

The essence behind both Jiva (twam) and Eswara (tat) is "Bliss-without-a-second" (adwayananda). The expressions of this one Bliss, through the microcosm, Avidya, and through the macrocosm, Maya, are the expressions as Jiva and Eswara.

It is very significant, and we must note it carefully, how Sankara here, with his precise expressions, specifically hints the Jiva, as the Witnessing-Consciousness within (prathyag-bodha) and Brahman as the One-Bliss-without-a-second (adwayananda). Due to Avidya, the conditioning in the Jiva, the individual can experience only the "awareness" and not the "bliss" aspect of Brahman; while, in the Supreme Self, "awareness" cannot be experienced, as there are no objects in It to be illumined--only Bliss and Bliss alone is the nature of Brahman.

In the Jiva, the ego, because of its mind-intellect equipment, which is constantly in agitation (vikshepa), the individual-self can express only its "Consciousness" (pratyag-bodha), and never the "Bliss" (adwayananda) nature of the Supreme-Self. The Brahman is realised when the equipments are all transcended--

and therefore it is a state wherein there are no whirls of objects-emotions-thoughts for the Consciousness to illumine. Naturally, the Supreme-Self is indicated here as Bliss-without-a-second (Adwayananda). When these equipments are removed, it is now logically clear that the Jiva, in its essential nature, is also Pure-Bliss, as the Brahman.

41. "If as said, the depth-meaning of the term "that" is "Mass-of-Bliss, without-a-second", and "thou" is the "Witnessing-Consciousness", then what? Listen: the Inner-self, the Consciousness, that illumines all thoughts, remains as the All-full, One-Mass-of-Bliss, without-a-second."

42. "The great statements, like "that thou art", established the identity of what is meant by the two terms "thou" and "that" in their deeper indicative-meaning."

The indicative-meaning (lakshyarth) of "that" was established as "the Mass of Bliss, without-a-second" (adwayananda), and "thou" as the "witnessing-Consciousness within" (pratyak bodha). These meanings are accepted, on discovering and experiencing the total identity between "thou" and "that". Naturally, in this process, the direct meanings (vachyarth) of the terms,--"thou" as Jiva and "that" as Eswara--were rejected. Then alone the total identity got established.

49. "Until the direct personal experience of "I am Brahman" is gained, we must live values of self-control, etc. and practice listening to teachers, or reading scriptures, and doing daily reflection and meditation upon those ideas."

Book-knowledge is the final goal, the be-all and the end-all of study, is true only in the objective sciences; in the subjective-science of spiritual unfoldment, the knowledge of the text is but a beginning; the final fulfillment is in the seeker's own direct, personal experience, "Brahman am I".

Often it can so happen to the seekers, that they have intellectually understood the import of the Mahavakyas. Yet, they are empty of the spiritual experience of the spiritual factor: the One Essence. To them Acharya Sankara prescribes the only logical way of life---the Sadhana-programme.

Those who have not cultivated in themselves the necessary preconditions can never soar high into the subtler realms of "their own inner personality". The values of the life to be lived are explained elaborately by Sankara in his Vivekachoodamani.

There are many direct psychological obstacles that come to block our final spiritual experience. When we try to sincerely and intelligently study the various statements of different scriptures, intellectually we may come to the



conclusion that they make but a confusing array of self-contradictory declarations. From these, many intellectual doubts (samsaya) can arise.

Again, subjectively, our mind's lust for sense-objects is so natural with us now that the hungry inner personality may try and even convince us that the theme of the scriptures is unnatural and contrary to life's true impulses (vipareetha-bhavana). Again and again we must read, study, listen, reflect and try to digest the scriptural thoughts and ideas. When by this process of study, reflecting and mutual discussions among students, our recognition of the One Self becomes clearer, then the sense of contrariness and the consequent perplexities (vipareetha-bhavana) will end.

Cultivate devotion for the Lord. Worship the Lord of your heart. Spend time and energy in the selfless service of mankind and the world around; this is to be undertaken as a worship of the Lord. These can help the inner equipment to unfold and glow with brightness, peace, cheer. The steadiness in meditation will thus increase.

The various personality adjustments recommended by Sankara in the Vivekachoodamani are all in fact of the best psychological adjustments in effectively facing our personal inner-problems and outer-challenges. Without these intelligent adjustments in our values-system, mental dissipations cannot

in fact, be reduced. A dissipated mind will never have the powers of penetration and the alertness necessary for fruitful study and effective contemplation.

A student who has thus carefully cultivated his inner equipments can consistently pursue the study of the scriptures and get deeper and deeper into their significance with his own sincere reflections. This prepares the seeker for a more and more rewarding meditation. Finally, he shall explode his ego-sense, gain a break-through and re-enter into the Infinite State of Pure Brahman. Until this personally intimate, totally subjective experience of the Supreme-Self is gained, Vedanta study is not to be considered as fulfilled.

51. "No more conditioned by his gross and subtle bodies, free from the embrace of the gross and subtle elements, released from the charm of actions, such a man gets immediately liberated."

The five gross elements in their combinations constitute the gross outer world of names and forms, including our gross bodies. The subtle elements go into the make-up of the mind and thoughts, including the sense-stimuli provided by the outer objects. The outer gross-body and its objects from the "effects" (karya) of the vasanas in the individual,

and the inner subtle-body, consisting of our mind and intellect, becomes the entire equipment (karana) of experience. They together, form the "tool kit" with us for contacting the world of plurality and for accomplishing our experiences.

To identify with them is to live and express as mere physical, mental and intellectual personalities. These triple aspects, together constitute the individualized ego in us. This ego in its unique experience-divine merges itself in the Brahman. All its identifications cease and the sense of individuality disappears.

This ego alone, had the arrogant vanity of "doership" (karttrttva bhava) and the "enjoyership" (bhottrttva bhava). It is the ego who did all actions in the past, collected all vasanas, and is now the experiencer of the fruit of those actions. When the ego ends all actions must cease, as an absconding criminal, when dead, the warrant of arrest issued against him must, of necessity, become both null and void.

The doer of an action, alone, can be the experiencer of its fruits. The doer-experiencer-entity, the ego, Jiva, has now awakened fully from its illusory dream of samsar into the State of Brahman. He should then get unavoidably freed from the chain-of action (karma).

To leave the dream is to wake up; to end the ego is to rise above the perceptions and sorrows of the world of multiplicity. There is no interval of time between the birth of Knowledge of the Supreme-Self and the liberation from the thralldom of the equipments. Such a realized sage, even in the midst of sense-objects, cannot be affected as he is fully and entirely released from the realm of subject-object world of finite joys and sorrow.

53. "The liberated-in-life comes to gain the State of Absolute Oneness, the never-ending immeasurable Bliss, called the Supreme Abode-of-Vishnu, from wherein there is no return."

That which never ends or sets (nirasta) is called Eternal Infinite. The liberated-in-life has finally arrived at this never-ending immeasurable Bliss called "the Supreme Abode-of-Vishnu" .... Here, it is not to be understood as Lord Vishnu's residence in heaven, the realm called Vaikunta, but is the Supreme State which is Vishnu, the All-Pervading.

On awakening to this State-of-Godhead, the Brahman, there is no return to the old misconceptions arising out of the body, mind and intellect identifications, and the consequent limited life of sufferings and tensions lived by the delusory ego (Jiva).

This final destination of evolution, the State of no-return, is called Kaivalya in Vedanta. That which has no distinction in itself, or with others, is called kevala; and that State of Homogeneous Brahman, the One without-a-second, is called the State of Kaivalya. The limited-in-life attains to this State of Bliss, and becomes one with Brahman--which, indeed, is the depth-meaning of the great statement "that thou art".

## Chapter Six

### INDIA AND HER ROLE IN THE WORLD\*

I would like to attempt an assessment of one aspect of Swami Vivekānanda's thought by taking up three interconnected views of his on the theme of India and her role in the world. On page 95 of the Swami Vivekananda on India and her Problems Swami Vivekananda says,

"The whole of the Western world is on a volcano which may burst tomorrow, go to pieces tomorrow. They have searched every corner of the world and have found no respite....."1

To elucidate and substantiate the views expressed in this statement I would like to begin with, (being a student of philosophy), the role of philosophy itself. Has philosophy anything, to do with the Western civilization having misadventured to a state where the future of all mankind is at stake, where our entire world, i.e. the planet earth with all forms of matter, life and intelligence on it seems to teether on the brink of total destruction. I would like to hazard a positive answer to this question.

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\* Paper presented at "All India Seminar on Swāmi Vivekānanda: A Contemporary Reassessment" held at B.H.U. Varanasi, March 16-18, 1986.

1. Swami Nirvedānanda (compiler), Swāmi Vivekānanda on India and her Problems, (Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta Sixth impression, 1971), p. 95.

The group of philosophers known as the Logical Positivists sought to classify all meaningful statements into two categories — the analytic, and the empirical. As value statements fitted into neither of these, they were to be banished from rational discourse and even deprived of cognitive content. Thus the philosophers, whose business it has been traditionally to deliberate on values, denied that they had any special training or competence to make judgements in this area. The scientists, including the social, seeking to make their disciplines more and more objective and 'scientific' declared them to be value-neutral or value-free. On the other hand there has been a greater and greater emphasis on development of science and technology, which are concerned with means only. Thus we have the strange phenomena of a civilization that is highly sophisticated in means and technique, but pays little attention to education for ends and goals of life. This condition has left the contemporary man ill-informed and uneducated on the most vital aspect of his life.

For want of a full and sustained inquiry into the values of life, his philosophical outlook has remained incomplete and flawed. Desire gratification and power which are obvious but surface goals of life, have been given importance beyond legitimate proportion. The result is a mad rush for pleasure, money and power, and a neglect of the higher and finer values of life. Love, cooperation, sympathy, fellow feeling, ethical,

aesthetic, religious and spiritual values of life have been neglected or relegated to a lower position. The baneful consequences of this lop-sidedness in values, we shall see shortly in conjunction with the other imbalances of contemporary civilization.

First of all, I may mention the faulty, emaciated epistemology or theory of knowledge. We have mentioned above how the philosophers sought to restrict cognitive import and meaningfulness to empirical and deductive statements only. This sets up the methodology of natural sciences as the supreme valid means of knowing. But whereas, the methods of science may well have proved to be most successful for study of natural phenomena, their extension to social and human spheres may be regarded as illegitimate. The reason as has been pointed out by many philosophers of social sciences and sociologists is that social phenomena and human actions are shot through with meanings, with the agents' reasons and concepts unlike the objects of nature. Further, sense organs and the deductive reasoning are not the only faculties of knowledge bestowed on man. He also has faculties of feeling, sentiment, empathy, intuition and beyond these the esoteric faculties of knowledge and understanding: the supersensuous and superrational - the yogic, and the meditational, the mystic and religious consciousness. Even though some social scientists and philosophers have paid some attention to the question of meaning



and development of methods suitable for study of meaning, little attention has been paid to the esoteric modes of consciousness. As a result there is an excessive and unhealthy dependence on the verdict of the senses and deductive reasoning; due to the limitations that beset them, the view of reality is unnecessarily narrowed and restricted. Aspects of reality which are not accessible to the empirical and rational are left unknown and un-understood, unintegrated in our life. This leaves our knowledge of reality too narrow, emaciated, one sided and poor.

More importantly, cultivation of surface values and a narrow restrictive epistemology, leads to a very poor and onesided view of human nature. Man has a body and a rational mind, no doubt, but this by no means can be said to give a complete view of man. He has moral, easthetic, spiritual dimensions also. As has been pointed out by psychologists also and as has been recognised by the religious/spiritual traditions since ancient times, there is not only the rational, linear, analytic, mode of consciousness, but also a rational, intuitive, holistic mode of human consciousness.

For a complete knowledge of human nature and a true conception of his happiness we need to explore both modes of consciousness and take into account the intimations of all aspects of his self.

Lack of a conscious deliberation on values and the adoption of kāma (pleasure) and artha (power, wealth, fame) as the major if not the only goals of life, a limited, faulty, inadequate epistemology, a narrow, incomplete view of man and his destiny, these are the three great banes of contemporary western civilization. Their harmful effects are there for all sensitive, thinking people to observe and mourn.

These great flaws individually and collectively have led to the development of a science and technology that are destructive (power pursuit gone astray) and the building up of a nuclear arsenal, of such magnitude and destructive power that it threatens to blow up all life on this planet to smitherings and damage its biosphere to such an extent that it would render earth an uninhabitable mass of swirling poisonous gases.

Unchecked pursuit of pleasure and ever increasing desires for comforts and conveniences have led to an excessible and unwise consumption of energy resources of earth and threaten to usher in a winter of energy deprivation.

High technology and industry in the service of both desire gratification and power have led to unprecedented and unbearable levels of air, water and soil pollution, excessive destruction of forests and many species of birds and animals and threatens to render human life unimaginably nasty, poor, poisoned and short.

Narrow, atomistic conception of man and excessive emphasis on pleasure and power which are divisive and competitive, have led to a devaluation of the social ties and weakening of the community, increase in social violence and crime, alienation and helplessness.

An uncritical acceptance of the prevalent superficial thinking on values has deprived him of a larger, comprehensive, true conception of the human good which alone can bring man durable and deep satisfaction. The pleasures of the senses and of power and achievement are able to hold man's attention for a while only and soon reveal themselves as trivial and transient calling for a seeking beyond. Even a long and intense pursuit of these ends fails to solve the problem of life and take him to the goal that he has been seeking. In spite of dazzling achievements in science and technology that are yoked in service of pleasure and power, man's life remains essentially empty, full of anxiety and nausea, ennui and a sense of meaninglessness. Due to the poverty of the soul, the contemporary man feels lonely and miserable in midst of spectacular materialistic achievements.

Thus inadequacies and incompleteness in theory of knowledge, view of human nature, conception of values and true good of man have deprived contemporary man of happiness and genuine progress and worse, have pushed mankind to the brink of total annihilation.

## II

"Now is the time to work so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the west..."<sup>1</sup> The world can be saved by the 'life-giving principles' of India. Each nation has its own 'national idea'<sup>2</sup> a mission, 'its own nature', 'its own peculiarity and individuality'<sup>3</sup>.

We have seen above the precarious condition in which mankind finds itself due to the inherent faults of the Western civilization which dominates the world today. As the cause is of a philosophical nature, relating to inadequate conception of human nature and the goals of life, no amount of piece-meal tinkering with socio-political institutions or the economic order, or the scientific-technological establishment can solve the problem: what is required is a change in the fundamental ideas about man and nature, a re-orientation of our understanding as to what constitutes the true good of man. It is precisely in these respects that India and her spiritual heritage has a vital role to play.

Swāmī Vivakānanda has said 'our life-blood is spirituality'<sup>4</sup>. The world needs this idea, it is "necessary for the preservation of the world"<sup>5</sup>. This is the distinctive

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1. Ibid; p. 95.

2. Ibid; p. 11.

3. Ibid; p. 3.

4. Ibid; p. 8.

5. Ibid; p. 11.

mission of India, her 'life-current', her distinctive contribution to the world-culture. Let us consider now in brief what our spirituality can contribute to the solution of the civilizational crisis and how it can save the world. Of necessity, we have to be highly selective in these deliberations.

We shall confine ourselves to the concept of man and goals of his life.

As to the concept of man, though the body, mind, and intellect are given their due place, the transcendental dimension of man's self is not lost sight of. There are the annamaya, prāṇamaya manomaya and vjñānamaya koṣas, but also the ānandamaya koṣa, and what is more, all the five including the ānandamaya are koṣas, sheaths, coverings of man's self, which in its true essence is of a transcendental nature. Man may be defined, studied, known as an object in so far as he is a body, mind or perhaps even as an intellectual being, but he is not exhausted by these and there resides in him the aspiration to inquire and reject as not-self that which can be brought into the realm of the object, the known. Thus inquiring he may rectify the most fundamental error in his life- which is more of the nature of a delusion and hallucination - the mistaken view of the nature of his own true self. There is an emphasis on the transcendental, suddha caitanya nature of his Self, realization of which cuts asunder the very roots of all limitation and suffering, and makes available the peace & joy that are inviolable.

The shift from body-mind organismic aspects of self to the spiritual, transcendental, has a bearing on what are considered to be the valid goals or ends of life. Kāma and artha, (pursuit of pleasure and power) which play such an important role in the Western civilization make their appearance there also, but the place they occupy in the hierarchy of values is a low one. They must be recognised to be valid as man's identification with the body-mind apparatus has deep roots, and it is only through following an arduous spiritual discipline, sadhana, that he discriminates the true self as different from them. Meanwhile it is important that the needs and desires of man which are based on the self as the body-mind be satisfied in ethically legitimate manner. For they are of a basic nature and provide conditions for higher pursuits. And yet they do not refer to the essential self and are to be subordinated to the law-dharma, while all the three yield to complete spiritual freedom (mokṣa), which constitutes the highest quest of man: the realization of his transcendental nature and freedom from all limitation and suffering. Thus when we turn to Indian civilization, we find a refreshing change. Wholeness in view of man's nature and his goals, a proper hierarchy of values, mark it. View of man as a spiritual being and a dethronement of pleasure and power from the highest place with a proper place accorded to them below the moral religious and the spiritual are the leading components

of our culture which are surely needed by the world today and which may even at this stage save mankind and other species from catastrophe - which is the culmination of a science and technology and an economic order which are based on an acceptance of limitless pursuit of desire and power as legitimate goals of man's life - which acceptance is itself an outcome of an inadequate philosophy of man and life.

Swāmi Vivekananda has said, "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within .... This is the whole of religion..."<sup>1</sup>

A civilization which is based on a concept of divinity, the transcendental dimension of man, has a different hue a different line of development and character.

No more a mad rush to eke out pleasure from objects and things, a heady but empty victory and power over other men and nature - the compulsive materialistic urges are replaced by a proper perspective of the nature and place of values. Science, technology, it will have, but a science and technology which have a human face and are pliable tools for need fulfilment rather than impersonal lordly establishments threatening to take over as masters. There is a recognition in such a civilization, of the essential oneness of all existence, 'Isāvasyāmidam Saryam'; and a relationship of love and harmony with Nature.

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1. The Complete works of Swāmi Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1962 Edition Vol. I., p. 257.

Even the bare survival of mankind may depend on a reliance on these elements from Indian spiritual tradition a learning to limit desire, keep in centre a holistic view of human nature, and fostering of relationships of love and harmony, not ruthless exploitation of nature.

### III

"If any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality, the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries, that nation dies, if it succeeds in the attempt."<sup>1</sup>

We have noted above, briefly though, the deficiencies and weaknesses of the western civilization, of its theory and practice, as well as the strengths of the Indian world-view and the promise it holds of helping mankind out of the morass in which it has get stuck following the lead of the west. That may be considered to provide a strong reason for a proper understanding and wider appreciation of India's philosophical spiritual heritage. Weighty though these considerations are in the context of placing India and her cultural ideas in the community of nations, they may not be considered to be the main reasons for its acceptance and admiration by us Indians. In our case stronger, more fundamental considerations prevail.

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1. India and her Problems, p. 8.



For we are sons of this land, products of its soil, history, social, cultural, philosophical and religious traditions. Our roots run deep and provide us sustenance and nourishment.

If under some mistaken notion of modernity or 'superiority' of Western culture and 'backwardness' a 'developing' character of India, some West-educated and West-oriented 'intellectuals' or 'elites', recommend for India a path of break from our past, and a rejection of our heritage, they do no service, but grievous harm to India and her people.

For the life of a nation is an integrated whole, a rich and complex but organic unity of many diverse but mutually inter-acting components. As such it has a unique hue a character, a direction of its own, a gestalt. Different components are inter-related in intricate manner determining the nature and character of other parts and in turn shaped and determined by them. Together they form a complex pattern of organically related, criss-cross parts that form a unique whole. The whole has the look and the direction it has because it has those parts interrelated in the subtle and fine manner that is unique. The significance and meaning of any of the parts also depends on the whole to which it belongs, on the other parts and the relationships it has with them. Since this is so, it is neither practical nor desirable to attempt transplants of cultures. Whole cultures cannot be simply lifted and put in another soil, replacing the indigenous culture, for they have

grown differently, in different conditions, historical social philosophical. No people or societies are 'tabula rasas,' waiting for superior cultures to come and inscribe their cultural forms.

Any attempt on our part, who are so inextricably formed by and embedded in it, to cut ourselves off from the mainstream of our traditions, with a view to transplanting cultural and intellectual traditions which have their origins in and are germane to an alien soil and forms of living, would have disastrous, even traumatic consequences. Cut off from our soil, our traditions, our world-view, our forms of living, our roots which are the sources of our life current and nourishment, nay our very identity, we turn ourselves into starved, restless, impoverished zombies pathetic in our attempt to step into other peoples' shoes, making hopeless attempts to grow in imitation both in our thinking and on living. But no people can grow and flourish having a vigorous and creative intellectual tradition, or strong, authentic living in such conditions.

In the sphere of intellectual life for example, thinking with borrowed concepts, theoretical framework and orientation which are the outcome of an alien socio-historical relegio-metaphysical tradition produces serious distortions, idling meaningless and futile linguistic gesticulating, superficial soulless thinking. The ideas and the models that

the foreign-indoctrinated intellectuals put forward, are mere copies or shadows of the originals that grow and flourish elsewhere and have little or no connexion to our social realities. Thought and philosophy have the important function of providing self-articulation to a culture. Self-consciousness shows up complexities, intricacy of relationships, gaps, blind areas, weaknesses as well as strengths in both theory and practice. This is important for illuminating social reality and for conscious deliberations on direction and goals of a civilization as also for determining the nature and character of social institutions and policies.

Always in the history of human societies, but especially today in an age of information explosion and greater than-ever-before-dependence on the cerebral, genuine meaningful theory occupies a central place in progress and development. With the intellectuals of a country bogged down in imitative, soulless thinking which draws its inspiration from another culture and is cut off from its own social realities, theory fails to perform its function. The nation is deprived of the benefits of its most valuable and evolved asset. There being no fit between theory and practice both are crippled. The theory remains dead, static, requiring every now and then infusion of blood from foreign life-streams, and the practice remains haphazard, wasteful, groping in the dark and running into blind alleys without the benefit of clear vision and foresight. These are made available by that

knowledge and reflection which naturally grow from its soil.

The consequences of spread of western education in India bear witness to the above. Educated in foreign concepts, intellectual traditions and modes; the 'educated' Indian feels estranged from his own society. Feeling like an alien in his own land, his one aspiration is to go to foreign lands where he feels at home. The thought traditions that he has fed on, the values that he has imbibed, drive him to the socio-cultural milieu of which they are the expressions.

Most of those who imbibe these values and modes of thinking become hyper-critical of their own culture and values, or at most defensive and apologetic about it.

It is hard to believe that we as a nation have run through our course and will survive no more. We have survived against heavy odds, through vicissitudes of fortune and upheavals of history, and have yet maintained our continuity and identity. But we survived in the past, against heavy political odds because we refused to let go of our religious-spiritual ways and values.

And yet today, under the powerful Western civilization and its materialist values which we unthinkingly and uncritically adopt in the garb of 'modernity' and 'development';\*

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\* Intolerable standards of consumption, 'conquering' & excessive exploitation of nature, an instrumental view of other species and objects of nature backed by an

contd....

there appears to be a serious threat to our forms of life. The contemplation and ānanda born of the indestructible & inviolable nature of the Self. The mode of life ranked high in the West and the direction of its civilization should aptly be described as under-developed or even one that follows a path of degradation. Suppose they had used 'civilized' and 'primitive' or 'being civilized' or 'cultured' and 'brutish' or being 'cultured' rather than 'developed' and 'developing' the game would be out. No one would accept it. Could we then say that

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(footnote contd...)

atomistic, anthropocentric view of the world- these may count as 'development' for the Western civilization, but it is amazing that we in India who have different conception & values, should accept the course of civilization set by the west as our goal and acquiesce to be judged as 'developing'. Given our conception of unity of all life, reverence for nature (our mountains, rivers trees, lakes are sacred), subjugation of individualistic pleasure & power to higher values of social cohesion, renunciation, and spiritual freedom which require spiritual practice, not indulgence but understanding and control of sense desires; our preference for a life of harmony rather than conflict & conquest, our emphasis on finding the sources of happiness within rather than outside in objects and things; how can we accept as 'development' what the West so prescribes? In our terms true development requires an inward turn, an examination of our identity and dimensions of self-image, a vivek between the self and not-self, the abiding and the transient, a turning away from a life of mere external gratification divorced from a knowledge of the true self as shallow as unfulfilling, a life of peace, friendly danger may be all the more serious as it is invidious and subtle; far too many of India's 'intellectuals' and 'elites'.

it is justified at least to talk of the West as economically developed?

we shall have to examine this too. Is it appropriate to call them 'developed' simply because some countries are 'richer', 'more exploitative', have accepted a technology that gives the illusion of and is in service of impossible goal of giving unlimited sense-gratification? (cf. the civilizations of Ravana, Hiranyakashyapa etc.). In the process it destroys eco-system, nature, **animals** and plants. Can it be called developed? It may be better to use a different terminology; more exploitative; or if there is insistence on 'development' terms; then 'over-developed' suggesting that they have gone farther than what is good or desirable for man and for his true good, would be more appropriate.

If we carefully analyse these issues, we shall stop at once the use of this terminology. The least we must do is to always prefix 'economically' to development, so that no judgment from other aspects is implied.

Is the West not under-developed with regard to inquiry into Self, concept of man, the true goals of man's life, from the point of view of ecological consciousness, underdeveloped in cultivation of gentle values of life-love, non-violence, compassion; unity of all life? An atomistic, aggressive seem to accept the path of a-meterialistic 'development' for India, even while continuing to pay lip service to our

spirituality. But as Swāmī Vivekānanda warned, if India loses her spirituality, as a nation she dies. Her distinctive note in the harmony of nations will be heard no more, missing will be the voice of a nation which has been entrusted with the mission "to conserve, to preserve, to accumulate, as it were, into a dynamo, all the spiritual energy of the race," and "to pour forth this in a deluge on the world"<sup>1</sup> in time of need and crisis.

We have talked above, especially in the context of India of the 'life-blood', the unique character, the organic, holistic nature of her society and culture and have pleaded for the preservation of its special character, its spiritual outlook and weltanschauung. We have also argued against the superimposition of alien cultural norms and ideals as both impractical and undesirable. However this is not to counsel that we cut off all contacts with other nations and insulate ourselves against all outside influences. Swāmī Vivekānanda

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1. Attitude for one's own desire gratification and power prevents the cultivation of gentler spiritual values. Shall we call them underdeveloped spiritually and then conveniently drop 'spiritually' and just judge them as underdeveloped? (This is what they have done to others using 'economic' criteria.) That would be more appropriate than adoption of economic criteria as supreme. For to describe as developed etc. simply on economic considerations is to put money on the highest place.

1 India and her Problems, p. 11

At another place Swami Vivekananda says: "shall India die? then from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest; fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies; and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be...." (Call to the Nation, p. 78).

who so strongly believed in the unique destiny of India and spoke so eloquently for preserving it saying that India will die if she gives up her spirituality\*\*, yet recommended an open-minded interaction with other nations. "I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others..... Give and take is the law....."<sup>1</sup>

There are, as a matter of fact, two kinds of contacts between nations and societies. In one, which often happens when the relationship is colonial or neocolonial there is a tendency often backed by tangible gains in money and position to adopt unthinkingly and imitatively the ideals and concepts as well as social mannerisms & customs of the foreign ruler. This is often accompanied by an attitude of superciliousness and ill-founded superiority towards the native traditions, concepts and values. All the objections that we have raised above regarding forced and artificial transplant of culture and ideas apply to this kind of unfortunate encounter between cultures. But there is another way in which we may interact

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\*\* "But mark you, if you give up that spirituality, leaving it aside to go after the materializing civilization of the West, the result will be that in three generations you will be an extinct race; because the backbone of the nation will be broken, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built will be undermined, and the result will be annihilation all around."  
Complete works p. 153.

1. Vivekananda, His Call to the Nation, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1969, p. 85.



with other societies and respond to their concepts, values and ways of living so that such interactions are not destructive; rather they may stimulate and enrich both the parties. We can have such constructive and useful contacts when we ourselves are well established in our traditions and ways. They require that we have an intimate understanding both at the practical level as well as at the level of theoretical articulation of our ways and the abiding impulses of our culture, that there is a natural flowering in our persons of the best that our culture contains, and that we are self-consciously aware of the nature and direction of our way of life. In brief it assumes that we know it in that we live it, and also we know it in that we have passed it under the X-ray light of analytical understanding as well as have viewed it holistically with a synoptic vision. When based on this knowledge we exhibit in our persons a quiet self-confidence, a legitimate pride, a natural rootedness, a sense of belongingness to our traditions; we may open the doors for new influences. Then we shall not be swept away, overwhelmed, or suffer from a deluge of undigested ideas which we do not know what to make of and which therefore only confuse & burden the mind and may even lead to a loss of sense of direction. Rather, we should then be in a position to interact in a healthy manner, able to appreciate and assess, take joy in others' peculiarities and uniquenesses, be stimulated and inspired by what is ennobling and beautiful and at the same

time judiciously reject and keep at an arm's length that which is spurious, undesirable and degrading. We shall also guard against impulses and ideas which may be detrimental to and destructive of ideals and values of our own culture. An amorphous openness to all and an uncritical acceptance of every wayward idea in the name of novelty, modernity, liberalness or internationalism is a corrupting enterprise and a sure ways to lose one's bearing not to speak of perpetual confusion and a pathetic superficiality that it generates. On the other hand a rigid and closed-minded stance in one's culture gives rise to a narrowness of spirit, smugness or worse an overbearing arrogance and snobbish rejection of others. Both these attitudes are to be avoided and for that what is required is the right-centredness and rootedness which can come only from a living contact with and nourishment from our own traditions, ways of living and thinking.

Dr. S.N. Mahajan  
H.S.S. Department  
Indian Institute of  
Technology, Kanpur

## Chapter Seven

### MORAL AND AESTHETIC VALUE - INDIAN AND WESTERN APPROACH\*

The topic of the seminar is "Moral and Aesthetic Value- Indian and Western Approach". Suppose I modify it to 'Dharma, Puruṣārtha and Rasa - Indian and Western Approach'. Immediately there will be expressions of consternation. It will be said that we can talk of Dharma or Puruṣārthas in the Indian tradition which is their home and where they are embedded alongwith other concepts with which they are enmeshed, but how can we talk of dharma etc. in the western tradition for which it is an alien category? It would further be pointed out that these concepts form part of an entire system of metaphysical beliefs, a world-view, a Weltanschauung and it is doubtful whether one can meaningfully look for them outside the traditions of which they are integral parts. The whole enterprise would be suspect, misplaced and futile. Further, not only the futility but also the harmfulness of such an enterprise would be underlined. It will be said that we cannot gain an adequate understanding of Western Philosophical tradition(s) through the use of concepts, categories and methods which are not germane to it. The use of alien concepts and methods would distort the meanings and give us a warped, limited, emaciated to the extent of

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\* This paper was presented at ICPR Seminar on "Moral and Aesthetic Value- Indian and Western Approach", held at M.S. University, Baroda, Sept. 22-24, 1986.

being false understanding of western tradition. It will be argued that the western tradition can be best understood in the context of its own history, its own concerns, its own problems and methods - past and present. For valid understanding of social reality and intellectual traditions we will be told it is important to keep in view the agents' meanings. And these are revealed only when the subject is studied in its terms.

As a matter of fact, I myself agree with this line of thinking. However I would like to point out that these considerations hold true in the reverse case also. That is to say that no difference is made in the situation from the point of view of validity of methodology simply because the roles are reversed and it is the Indian thought or tradition that is sought to be studied with the use of western concepts. Indeed for reasons of a colonial history it is the studies of Indian (Eastern in general and African etc.) traditions that have suffered greivously on account of methodological excesses and tyranny.

None-the-less when the western scholar subjects Indian traditions to western assumptions and methods, unwittingly sometimes (because of unself-conscious acceptance of the standards with which he is familiar as superior or even perhaps as universally valid) the loss is intellectual: that of missing an opportunity to have a true appreciation of a

different tradition and the richness as well as expansion of intellectual horizons that are consequent upon such an appreciation. But it is infinitely more serious and baneful when we ourselves commit this mistake. Before I proceed further I shall like to dwell on this point for a brief while. As has been indicated above the intellectual life of a society as embedded in their social sciences, literature and philosophy is an integral part of a concrete social living, philosophical problems and issues arise within the philosophical tradition which in turn forms part of an entire complex social reality. There is an interaction between the philosophical and say the literary works, the philosophical views and social institutions, between philosophy and politics, economy and culture and so on. Interacting with one another all these traditions retain their living and dynamic character. Each has as its matrix, broadly speaking, the complex social reality, each is a member of an integrated organic whole exhibiting the characteristics that constitute a form of life. Rooted in the soil and interrelated, responsive to the changes and alternations in other members of the system, these intellectual traditions are sensitive to the challenges of the time.

Thus philosophy and politics, economics and history, sociology and psychology, etc. as disciplines of study and patterns of thought have an important role to play in the functioning and forward movement of a society. The way we

intellectually view ourselves is a product of society and in turn influences its course. In a free society the intellectual traditions are authentic, i.e., they are indigenous, having grown from ways of life, they articulate and refine practice. In the process of this articulation and refinement, they guide, lead and suggest modifications and directions; point out dangers and pitfalls as well as opportunities and challenges. In this way they make a vital contribution to the social and national life. In the colonial or neo-colonial societies, however, the ideas and thought patterns of the rulers are superimposed on the existing stream of life. The indigenous thought-stream is choked and allowed to stagnate and dry up. A living tradition is stifled and maimed, and is no more able to serve the needs of society of which it is a child. Having allowed or even encouraged the wilting of the native tradition, the alien concepts and intellectual frameworks are introduced as 'superior' or 'modern' with all the harmful consequences that we have mentioned above. Under the impact of colonialism the natives adopt the rulers' styles of expression and ways of thinking but find themselves in no position to make any significant contributions. Thus the 'thinkers' and 'intelligentia' become useless, and to their own society mere outsiders, perpetually in a position of inferiority in relationship to the 'masters' traditions. The adoption of the alien and therefore inauthentic thought-

patterns spell ruin for the intellectuals and ensure a place of permanent inferiority for the society itself. For how can we expect a people to prosper and rise especially in these days of knowledge-explosion and superiority of the cerebral, when it is deprived of the services of its most important segment - the scholars, intellectuals and those whose job it is to provide sight and vision?

## II

Many, then, are the baneful consequences of thinking in borrowed terms and alien patterns and perspectives. We ought to, then, make an attempt to deliberate on questions and problems of values as they arise in Indian tradition(s) : i.e., there is need to take a look on Indian tradition with regard to these questions in its own terms. Let us not, then, look for an exact equivalent of 'moral value', but attempt to formulate what may be regarded as allied issues as they may appropriately be raised in the Indian part of the topic.

The Indian discussion of what comes close to value is undoubtedly to be found in the view of puruṣārthas. For a complete life the attainment of the four puruṣārthas has been regarded as imperative. To have a proper appreciation of value orientation of the Indians we need to understand not only mokṣa which is a transcendental, spiritual value

and dharma, but also artha and kāma, as well as their inter-relationships. Some scholars have paid a lot of attention to dharma but have sought to abstract from it its moral/ethical dimensions and treat it in isolation. But dharma is not a moral term alone. It is a rich and a complex concept and its connotations vary from external cosmic order to sacred law, righteous conduct, the principle of a thing - that which makes a thing what it is - custom, ways of life, obligation, svadharma, the whole duty of man in relation to the general moral, material and intellectual purposes of life. A proper study would involve a careful consideration of these dimensions in their interrelatedness and concreteness. Further, important though the concept of dharma is, it is only one amongst the four puruṣārthas; the integrative and holistic view that is contained in the theory of four puruṣārthas which cover concerns of the physical and vital self, but also the social, normative and the transcendental; has to be kept in view and not lost sight of. For if we concentrate on anyone of these that shall give us only a distorted and lop-sided view. Questions arise about the appropriate means for the attainment of the puruṣārthas, the legitimate but provisional nature of kāma and artha, the place of aesthetic enjoyment and so on. A detailed inquiry into these and related issues will provide us with deeper insight into the Indian conception of goals of life. On the basis of these we can



form a correct picture of human achievement - i.e., the achievement that can be attained by the soul only while it is embodied in the human form. Here lies a rich area for philosophical reflection and inquiry. And indeed when conducted in these terms it promises to make available to us a genuinely alternative (alternative e.g., to the Anglo-American views of goals and values of life) perspective on the true goals of man. That will mean an enrichment of the intellectual - moral - spiritual ideas of contemporary man. Further in terms of standards and forms of argument that are germane to the traditional critical inquiries may also be made. Self-consciousness about the basis of one's criticisms, however, is necessary if one is not to do injustice under the mistaken belief of 'valid' 'objective' standards which on examination turn out to be no more than contributions of an ethnocentric consciousness.

while the theory of puruṣārthas provide us with one creative approach to the question of values and the unique end of man's life, the other most rich avenue that is available to us is sādhanā. It may not be an exaggeration to say that the Indian World-view is sādhanā - oriented. Sādhanā includes discipline (including what may be recognised as moral) but of course is a much richer concept than that of discipline. It points to a whole way of living including the training of the emotive, cognitive and actional faculties of man. There are different kinds of sādhanās and a person may follow one or

the other depending on his disposition, samskāras and level of attainment. All of them however contain the idea of a purposeful goal-oriented way of living that will eventually transform the sādḥaka's life-from a life of lack, fragmentation, small achievement and transient pleasures to a life of fullness, completeness, ānanda, perfection and final fulfilment. Anyone who is interested in the question of values and a value-oriented life especially in the context of Indian contributions, must devote himself seriously to a full study of sādhanā.

Jñāna- Yoga, Bhakti, Karma and rāja-yoga refer to the prominent sādhanās even though this enumeration is by no means exhaustive. All of these are rich sources of knowledge and insight into the nature of aspiration, effort and the mode of living that is involved in the pursuit of the highest value. Even though the academic philosophers in India have by and large neglected this area (it does not quite fit the epithet of moral as traditionally understood in the west), it is a source of rich philosophical inquiry. Issues and problems arise in each one of the major sādhanās. It is not possible to take up for a detailed analysis and discussion anyone of these within the scope of this paper. I would like however to touch on a few issues in the sādhanā known as karma-yoga.

First of all there arise certain problem regarding the very possibility of karma-yoga. The essence of karma-yoga lies

in that it seeks to make available to man freedom through action. But it is held on the other hand that it is action which binds man. How is the very purpose of karma-yoga to be squared with the belief in its binding nature? This requires careful reflection. It has been said that karma binds in two ways (1) It produces consequences, good or bad which have to be suffered or enjoyed by the agent. (2) It produces samskāras, impressions in the agent giving rise to or strengthening certain dispositions which further produce actions and thus a vicious cycle keeps man in bondage.

To elucidate (1) according to the merit or demerit of actions performed, the agent finds himself in favourable or adverse, 'happy', 'fortunate' circumstances or 'adverse' 'unhappy' and 'unfortunate' conditions. These 'happy' or 'unhappy' circumstances tend to arouse favourable or unfavourable attitudes, attachment or aversion. These psychological reactions further condition the mind, cloud its nature of pure, unbounded consciousness and result in further egoistic action. Born of ego-centered modifications of the mind these actions are themselves of a meritorious or unmeritorious nature, and further lead to circumstances that make for the self having to experience pleasure or pain. Thus the vicious cycle continues : actions - conditions - actions etc; the bondage of the soul and pattern of meaningless existence getting stronger in the process.

The vicious cycle of actions - conditions - actions may however, be avoided by samatā (samatavam - Yoga - Ucyate). When a sādḥaka takes an attitude of equanimity he vanquishes rāga and dveṣa and breaks the chain of further egocentric actions. It is not action which produces the bondage of circumstances. Strictly speaking even the egoistic action cannot bind through the mediacy of circumstances. For even though conditions of pleasure and pain, elation or suffering are created by ego-centric actions, a man has always the freedom not to allow these conditions to get the better of him. He is free to train his mind, and to make use of circumstances as opportunities for practice of samatā and for further spiritual growth and progress. We may note here that the recognition of this freedom to make use of external conditions for growth rising above rāga and dveṣa, renders criticism of the law of karma as fatalistic etc. invalid in this respect. The other thrust of such a criticism concerns the bondage of karma in terms of formation of saṃskāras. In a way, the latter is a more fundamental issue : for, if a man is what his saṃskāras are, if he cannot but relate and react to the world and other human beings, in a way that is determined by his previous saṃskāras, and if he has no way to exhaust his old saṃskāras without creating new ones then freedom remains out of reach.

The great purpose of karma-yoga is to make available precisely such a method i.e., a method by which a person may work out his old saṃskāras while taking care to produce no or minimal saṃskāras so that he walks on the path of greater and greater freedom. Let us consider in brief how this may be done.

The given facts are:

The egoistic structure with its rāga-dveṣa, predispositions saṃskāras, which narrow and limit his consciousness, make him the kind of person he is, more a blind and willing slave of his saṃskāras than someone who is conscious of their existence and their hold on his present thoughts, emotion and actions. The saṃskāras have given him a human body, parents, society, nation etc., and his association with each of these gives him certain needs, dispositions, likes and dislikes. These include bodily needs psychological and social urges of various kinds. As a carrier of these desires and dispositions he interacts with the environment and judges the objects/events as friends or enemies, and develops rāga or dveṣa towards them. In this way this personality structure continues to grow assimilating the events and his interactions in his characteristic way to continue the development of his self in his not necessarily, in fact rarely, chosen, but nevertheless characteristics manner. This is the

given normal human being. The vibrating entity, constituted by his dispositions, drives, needs, urges, memories, associations, thought emotions and so on is the individual ego, constantly in contact with the world, constantly reacting to the stimuli emotionally and working, acting, accordingly. The most pervasive and basic of the emotional reactions are pleasure and pain, with attachment for pleasure and aversion for pain. The emotional response of pleasure and pain or indifference, consequent judgement of events as 'good', 'bad' or 'neutral', and seeking or avoiding of behaviour accordingly, are to a lesser or greater degree pervasively characteristics of man's life. This way of being is natural to man, naisargika, without anybody's doing anythings, the cycle of this becoming keeps moving. It is clear that this mode of being only nourishes the Banyan of ego, solidifies the egoistic pattern more and more - taking him further away from mukti, true freedom.

So what elements should one inject into this mode of becoming so that the samsriti, this ever moving, on - going process may be slowed down and eventually stopped?

The answer will depend on the stage of the sādḥaka. Let us take the case where he becomes aware of the force of desires in himself, but is still enamoured with them. He has certain vāsanās. The vāsanās urge him to certain kinds of actions, he

finds that he cannot suppress this force of the vāsanās, it is too strong to resist. In such a situation he engages in appropriate action and allows this force to find a channel in action and spend self. With a lot of energy caught up in the vāsanā having been released in action dictated by it, there is a cathartic effect, the vāsanā is weakened and the careful sādḥaka at this point of its weakness is able to detach the mind from it. Having arisen, and finding expression the vāsanās and saṃskāras weaken and exhaust themselves, provided there is a proper attitude on the part of the sādḥaka. If he allows a further deepening of egoistic involvement, rāga - dveṣa will be further created and he will keep going around and around. The old saṃskāras exhaust themselves but as in the case of raktabīja, new ones sprout. (You cannot cut and would a raktabīja - the blood will give rise to many more, you must suffocate it to death). An attitude of calm detachment, without reaction of rāga and dveṣa that is what is required. This is obviously very difficult in the case of sakāma karma. For when desire is the motivating force of an action, rāga, dveṣa, and other characteristics of desire life - worry, anxiety, etc. will also follow - and these would, of course, create further saṃskāras and vāsanās. they would only strengthen and thicken the egoistic structure that binds. In the case of niṣkāma karma, however, it is feasible. For here the

motivation is not provided by personal, egoistic desire, but consideration of duty, welfare of others, service of humanity, love devotion to God etc. Doing actions with these motivations, he can with care and alertness avoid *rāga dveṣa* and eventually even a sense of his having done it. Thus he allows the past *samskāras* to get exhausted and creates no new ones. In due time he will be free of all *samskāras* and be free.

But this raises two questions: one about *niskāma* karma and one about the *sakāma*, both important.

First about *niskāma* : engaged in non-egoistic action, the karma yogi exhausts his old *samskāras*. The question is does non-egoistic action exhaust *samskāras* of egoistic acquisition, that is, *samskāras* which normally would involve him in ego-centred actions? Only if this is so, would karma yoga, *niskāma* karma be a path for the *sādhakas*, and not just a natural way of being for the realized souls. The *sādhakas* have to find a way for burning their ego-centred desires. If the *sakāma* karma does not competently deal with egoistic desire: it creates further *samskāras* and so bondage, and if *niskāma* karma is meant only for those who have already transcended all desires, then karma yoga would not be a path - for it would have nothing to say to those to whom alone a 'path' is relevant: the *sādhakas* : those who have desires, but wish to go beyond them to the realm of freedom.



This problem may be solved thus: at the *niskāma* stage the person has egoistic desires, but wishes to cross them. There is a lot of his energy caught up in these, yet unworked out *vāsanās*. If he undertakes action to fulfil them, he creates further chains due to personal involvement and the consequent *rāga*, *dveṣa* worry etc. So by doing action from non-egoistic motives he finds a harmless and constructive expression for his energies. Thus he withdraws his vital energies from desire-thoughts, disallows actions in the service of desires, and thus starves them out, suffocates them to death. When no actions and no thoughts and feelings arise, the desire *samskāras* are stimulated but as they find no food, no encouragement (because they are watched but nothing is done as per their demands), they become weak and subside. Then this happens again and again, the desire-self dies and with that the *sādhaka* ego also. The *sādhaka* ego is needed as long as there are desires to deal with them in a constructive and helpful manner.

This applies to the aspirants who are aware of the pitfalls of desire life and are yet not free from its clutches. But what has karma yoga to say to those who are still enamoured with desires and wish to perform action for their fulfilment? For them *karma* yoga recommends a pursuit of desires under the regulation of dharma. Pursuing desires (in socially sanctioned ways: that makes it easy for everyone to pursue their

respective life styles), the individual comes to see the limitations of the desire life through his own concrete experience. The vicious cycle of desire - more and more if satisfied, anger and restlessness when frustrated and the anxiety, fear, insecurity, worry etc. which tarnish the desire mind, will eventually make him realize the limitations of this mode and the need to transcend it. And at that point he is ready for *niṣkāma* karma.

There are many other questions that arise and demand philosophical deliberations. Karma-yoga at its highest stage, that is *niṣkāma* stage appears to imply eradication of desire: but can there be action without desire? What about the desire to be free, i.e., desire to be desireless? Is that itself a desire that binds? What about survival-oriented desires - desires which arise from basic needs of man - e.g., the biological? We have included *sakāma* - karma also within the scope of karma - yoga, but some may object to it. What considerations may be forwarded in settling this point? Then there are questions of *kauśalam* (skill) in action - (*Yogah Karmasu Kauśalam*). What does this skill consist of? How is the skill of a *niṣkāma* - *kartā* greater than that of a *sakāma* - *kartā*? What are the stages within *sakāma* and also within *niṣkāma* karma? Then there is the question of the very place of karma in freedom. What if freedom were possible only through a

complete cessation of action? Where does this line of thought take us?

Of these and numerous other questions I shall take up below all too briefly though, only two: the first concerns the place of sakāma karma in karma yoga.

Let us discuss the inclusion of sakāma - karma in karma-yoga by reference to the Bhagavad-gīta itself the most celebrated text of nishkāma - karma. The Gīta says, "Karmanye-vādhikāraṣṭe ma phaleṣu kadāchana; mā karma phalaḥetur bhūmāte sangostu akarmani" (II 47). "In action alone have you got right, not in the fruit thereof. Do not be one living for the sake of the fruit of the action, nor should you have any attachment to in- action."

The first line states the principle: one has no claim on the fruit of the actions, he does have claim over action. Hence neither should one give up the opportunity provided by work (to move towards freedom), nor should one fret and fume and make his life miserable by claiming what is not his. In emphatically enjoining upon man to do his allotted works and duties, but also at the same time asking him not to do it for the sake of personal gratification (fruit), the verse propounds nishkāma karma.

At other places the Gīta also speaks out against hypocrisy, and that one should not create confusion in the

minds of others. What one adopts as a guide for life must be in harmony with his nature and stage - (concept of Adhikārī plays an important role here), otherwise it may lead to hypocrisy: a division between what he professes and what he internally desires and does. Thus for those who have not seen and are not convinced about the truth of the above and have strong desires which they wish very much to satisfy, niṣkāma karma cannot be the appropriate philosophy of life. For in their case profession of desireless in action would be false and an expression of hypocrisy only. Thus in their case, it must be sakāma karma that is recommended, sakāma karma under the guidance and regulation of dharma.

One should not work for fruit ----- (1)

There should be no hypocrisy ----- (2)

One should not abandon action ----- (3)

It follows from (1) and (3) that those who can act so, without hypocrisy without a desire for fruit they should act so, They are adhikārīs of that.

(2) says that one must avoid hypocrisy therefore sakāma karma is the only way for others.

Hypocritical niṣkāma karma is not niṣkāma. Hypocrisy means there is only a show, not the reality.

No fruit. Action ----- (I) (Ideal)

Hypocrisy ----- (II) (to be avoided)

When (I) leads to (II) modify one. In modifying (I) we can have,

No fruit. No action ----- (III)

But, (III) will not do. For hypocrisy was in the fact that there is a desire for fruit. Therefore,

(III) will also suffer from hypocrisy.

Or, Fruit. No action ----- (IV)

But this will also not do. For no action is rejected by (3) above and also desire for fruit without action will be ineffective, a mere wish.

Hence Fruit. Action ----- (V)

That is sakāma karma.

Vigorous action is required, both at the sakāma and the niskāma stages. Vigorous action is likely to result in success making it possible for him to have had enough of it, to be through with it, to transcend it in the true sense and not from a 'grapes are sour' feeling. Such a detachment is well founded and firm. Secondly, as we mentioned above, through our past, we have accumulated dispositions for certain kinds of actions and situations - the mind has, so to say, many of these mini programmes which impell him to take certain routes and engage in some kinds of works. Now, a slow, half-hearted, insipid, tamas-ridden life is unlikely to effect a complete exhaustion, a thorough evacuation of them from the psycho-system.

The second issue concerns the relationship between action and ego and the cessation of all action from life for freedom. This raises the question of binding nature of karma (with which we started our discussion of karma-yoga) at a subtler level. The problem may be posed thus: is any action possible at all without a limited ego? Is ego not a necessary condition for action? In that case any action proceeds from ego and to <sup>be</sup> engaged in action would amount to the preservation and furtherance of the ego - structure which is the root of bondage. What meaning would one give to the expression 'free-action'?

One line of response to this problem consists in a discussion of the possibility and nature of non-egoistic action. Alternatively, in case, it is held that action necessarily implies an ego would an 'as - if' ego (Paramahansa Rāmakṛṣṇa used to talk of an 'as-if' ego of a jñāni or a Bhakta etc.) meet the requirement? That would still keep the possibility of action with freedom, open.

Another response may be the recommendation of cessation of action altogether alongwith a non-action-al way of burning the existing vāsanās and stoppage of formation of new vāsanās and saṃskāras. This is the path of nirvikalpa samādhi - where there is a total cessation of action, indeed of experience, thought, vṛttis,. It may be extended to exclude

any contact with the external world. Contact with the world may be said to be a necessary condition for the formation of vāsanās, vāsanās solidify into desires, from desires arise actions which lead to further contacts and vāsanās and so on.

The path of nirvikalpa samādhi conceals the following assumptions:

- (1) That old existing vāsanās and saṃskāras can be exhausted without action - through some such method as meditation, inquiry etc.
- (2) That new vāsanās can be stopped from arising by non-contact with the external world, quietening of the senses, body and also the mind. For if the mind is active, it will generate thoughts, liking and disliking, vāsanās and vṛttis. Thus it must be stilled completely without a trace of thought in it.

The path of nirvikalpa samādhi then is a path of complete cessation of experience and raises further questions about its possibility and desirability.

There is no dearth of issues in philosophy of dharma, puruṣārthas or sādhanā. I have taken above, in the briefest possible manner, one or two of them for illustrative purposes. Further, there are important questions about aesthetic value in the Indian tradition, e.g., the theory of Rāsa and

descriptions of rasa-delight as Brahmānanda sahodara. My attempt has been to make a plea for consideration of issues in Indian philosophical tradition in terms provided by the tradition itself rather than those that are borrowed. I do hope that this seminar will take us one step ahead in this direction - one step closer to authenticity, originality and creativity in philosophy.

Dr. S. N. Mahajan  
H.S.S. Department  
I.I.T. Kanpur



## Chapter Eight

### FREEDOM : AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE \*

A proper appreciation of the various dimensions of freedom occupies a central place in the formulation of an adequate concept of man. Yet philosophical debate on freedom has since the beginning of modern science converged on whether determinism leaves room for notions of responsibility and other related concepts. A great controversy has raged over this, but it seems to have been a common assumption with the majority of the discussants that this is the most important question about freedom. The assumption seems to be that the philosophical problem of freedom is limited to such reconciliations and that once a satisfactory solution has been found in this respect, no philosophical problems remain. Thus those who believe that they have succeeded in showing determinism and responsibility compatible feel justified in rejecting any further questions on freedom of will as futile and as pseudo-problems. But it is not clear why the question of free will is considered a pseudo-problem. To confine our attention to a determination of the question whether and when is an action free in the sense that it justifies ascription of responsibility to the agent, and refuse to consider the further question,

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\* Paper presented at All India Seminar on Concept of Man at I.A.A.S. Simla, 1974.

namely, whether and when is his choice free is simply to refuse to get at the heart of the matter.

As many penetrating analyses have been offered over it, this controversy does not form the main part of this paper. Here my main concern is to focus attention on an important aspect of our understanding of freedom, an aspect that has rather remained neglected. I refer to the philosophical considerations of conditions and attainability of inner freedom. Strictly speaking this concern is independent of whatever view one may hold on the reconciliation issue. However it might show the need of such investigations all the more clearly if it is shown that the attempted reconciliation between responsibility and determinism remains illusory and that at least part of the reason for its being a superficial resolution is precisely the neglect of the area of inner constraints and the possibility and extent of freedom from them. In that case, such investigations may be seen to be not only not irrelevant but in fact essential to any satisfactory solution of the problems centering around freedom, determinism and responsibility.

Historically one of the reasons for which free will has denied, in spite of our intuitive feeling to the contrary was the fact that it stood as a stumbling block in unified view of the world. The whole realm of nature was seen as

amenable to causal - deterministic treatment thus giving us a clear direction in which our inquiry may proceed, namely, towards a finding of causal relationships and causal explanations. It also gave man a sense of definite achievement and confidence and raised his perennial hopes of bringing the whole world of phenomena under the known or at least the knowable. Now if the possibility of a deterministic account of human behaviour were granted, the possibility of attaining scientific knowledge in this sphere also would be established, even though in practice such a procedure might be severely beset with many difficulties. Thus attempts of this type were made and came to be associated with 'tough' philosophers, hardheaded scientifically oriented investigators as against somewhat old-fashioned and wooly-headed sentimentalists. And yet it had these flaws: it was counter-intuitive, and further these very philosophers who otherwise put such a high premium on hard-data and clear explanations, were not able to produce any hard facts which shew that all human actions were in fact determined, nor were they able to explain this 'illusion' of free will. It thus amounted to more or less a plea to disregard our intuitive feeling of free will for the sake of a theory. No wonder then that the deterministic thesis about human will carried little conviction. Then there were of course, considerations of the sort hinted above: those concerning our notions of moral responsibility, praise and

blame. These also seemed to be incompatible with a deterministic view of human behaviour. Denying these notions as valid would have the consequence of making non-sense of much of our moral theory and practice-- thus the focus on this aspect of the problem and the attempts to show that acceptance of determinism is not incompatible with the notion of free responsible action. As mentioned above there is a lot in recent philosophical literature on this.<sup>1</sup>

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1. See, for example,

M. Schlick: "When is a man Responsible?", Problems of Ethics (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939), pp. 143-156. Also reproduced in Edwards and Pap: A Modern Introduction to Philosophy, (New York: The Free Press, Revised edition 1965), pp. 51-59 and B. Berofsky ed. : Free will and Determinism, (N.Y.: Harper and Row 1966, pp. 55-63.

John Hospers: "What means this Freedom?" in Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science, ed. Sidney Hook (N.Y.: Collier Books 1961), pp. 126-142, reproduced in Berofsky op. cit., pp. 26-45. Also "Free will and Psychoanalysis" in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 1950. Also see his Human Conduct (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace and World 1961).

C.A. Campbell: "Is 'Free will' a Pseudo-Problem?" Mind LX No. 240 Oct. 1951, pp. 446-465.

B. Holback: "The Illusion of Free Will" in Edwards and Pap, pp. 10-18.

R.E. Hobart: "Free Will as Involving Determinism and Inconceivable without It", Mind, XLIII, No. 169, Jan. 1934, pp. 1-27, also reproduced in Berefsky pp. 63-95.

P. Foot: "Free Will as Involving Determinism" in the Philosophical Review LXVI, No. 4 (Oct. 1957), pp. 439-450, also reproduced in Berefsky, pp. 95-108.

There is little use of reproducing the various arguments for and against such a position. The crucial move on the part of the reconciliationists has been to emphasise a distinction between 'free action' and 'free choice', between the relevance of external restraints in making a choice as against the internal compulsions. If a man does X because he chose to do X, then X is a free action of his and he is responsible for it. If he has not been compelled, if he does not act under external compulsion or coercion, he is free. This sense of freedom is all that is implied by our ordinary discourse and all that is required to explain moral responsibility. Since determinism does not deny freedom in this sense, the problem is seen to be dissolved.

But is it so dissolved? Ordinarily we do seem to mean by freedom that the person acted out of his choice and that if he had chosen otherwise he could have acted otherwise. We would not call an action free if the agent did not have the freedom to translate his choice into actions, and if he was indeed compelled or coerced by forces external to him to do what he did. But this is not all that is implied in characterization of an action as free. Suppose it was shown to our satisfaction that action X did occur as a result of A's choosing to do X but further that A could not but make that particular choice, that although it is granted

that he could have acted otherwise if he had chosen otherwise, this cannot be granted that he could have chosen otherwise. That is, if it be shown that a choice is determined to be what it is, then the action which results from such a choice can hardly be called a free-action in the full sense of the term. To refuse to press our probing in to the realm of choice is only to expose oneself to the charge of deliberately taking a myopic view because it suits one, of shying away from facts which cast shadows of doubt on a position dear to one. Surely we need to examine whether the notion of freedom required for ascription of responsibility in our ordinary discourse is that of 'negative freedom', freedom from external coercion alone, and further even if this were so what to make of it. For supposing that this were the case, it would still be indecisive. As has been said ordinary language is the first, not the last word.<sup>2</sup> Our ordinary notions though more stable than many other social institutions, still do change in the light of new discoveries in the relevant area of knowledge. Thus, though our ordinary discourse may not have reflected any worries as to free-choice, and had considered freedom from external restraint sufficient for ascription of responsibility, it may be due to absence

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2. J.L. Austin: Philosophical Papers. "A Plea for Excuses" "Certainly, then, ordinary language is not the last word: in principle it can everywhere be supplemented and improved upon and superseded. Only remember: it is the first word." p. 133.

of any disquieting discoveries which cast doubts on the freedom of choice. It is not certain that if further reaches of knowledge were to cast serious doubts on the possibility of free choice, our ordinary way of talking will not be modified to reflect it.

However the fact is that though we generally do ascribe responsibility to people for their free-actions we do so only because we have an implicit faith that the choices from which these actions have stemmed, are themselves free-choices. For instance, when a defence lawyer in a court succeeds in establishing that the accused could not but have chosen to act as he did, that his internal compulsions left him no freedom of choice, he is taken to have made a strong case for absolving his client from any responsibility for the act concerned. As a helpless victim of his inner compulsions he is recommended to need professional psychiatric help, not punishment. Now the plea may be rejected and the accused punished: in many cases it is simply due to the failure of the defence to establish the fact of his client being a 'psychotic' rather than an ordinary criminal. But if there are cases in which the accused is punished even though the insanity of the accused has been successfully established, it may be attributed to the current climate of opinion in which the common people are not convinced that the evidence available justifies a belief in rigid determinism in the human

realm. It does not mean that in case such a determinism were well established they would still continue to hang on to the old beliefs which would have been in that case rendered obsolete.

We may take it then that the absence of external constraints is generally believed to constitute only a necessary condition for freedom, not a sufficient one. To supply the full conditions of freedom we must look towards the absence or presence of internal constraints, inner compulsions. In any case these cannot be disregarded by any serious student of human freedom. In fact in so far as the internal compulsions are more subtle and elusive but forge a formidable vice-like grip on man, any analysis of freedom which leaves out an understanding of these factors will necessarily remain superficial. A serious student of human freedom must therefore turn to reflections on the nature and extent of such constraints, the possibilities and extent of breaking free from them and the ways recommended for doing so.

## II

To the philosopher's concern with the inner conditions of human freedom, the rise and growth of psycho-analysis and psycho-therapy in the recent thought developments would



seem to be of particular relevance. Psycho-analysis has shown that a large part of our behaviour, decisions and choices are determined by factors which are not external but within the psyche of the individual: often having roots in what has been called the unconscious.<sup>3</sup> The unconscious is outside the area of control by the conscious mind and acting from beneath the surface, it keeps distorting activities of man.<sup>4</sup> When this results in noticeable peculiarities and deviations conjoined with excessive worry, anxiety and mental suffering we speak of a neurosis and a neurotic personality. But if the mental suffering is not just excessive but intolerable and deviations are more like serious maladjustments rather than eccentricities generally necessitating residence in a mental institution, we speak of psychosis and the psychotic personality.<sup>5</sup> Thus although determinism by the unconscious is a feature of normal life, it stares one in the

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3. See e.g. works by Freud.

4. See e.g. C.G. Jung: "Problems of Modern Psycho-therapy" The Collected Works of C.G. Jung. Bollingen Series XX Vol. 16 N.Y. Pantheon Books, 2nd Ed. 1966, p. 56.

5. Cf. "But in waking life, too, we continue to dream beneath the threshold of consciousness, especially when under the influence of repressed or other unconscious complexes." and also "All unconscious contents which either approach the threshold of consciousness from below, or have sunk only slightly beneath it, affect the conscious mind."

5. See e.g. Frieda-Fromm Reichmann, Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950, 3rd ed. 1964).

face move noticeably in cases of neurosis and psychosis.

At best the individual goes through only the motions of making a decision, a choice; in fact it is no more than an illusion.

His choices are determined and predictable in accordance with the pattern of behaviour concomitant with particular complexes.

The conscious will of man is only a slave, an instrument in the hands of deep unconscious motives which actually determine his conduct. Thus the neurosis and psychosis severely circumscribe and limit the freedom of man, the correlation between the two being that of inverse proportion.

In the light of this we are led to modify our approach to the problem of inner freedom. Our attention shifts from a question of the type, 'does man have inner freedom', seeking a yes/no type of answer, to a deep understanding of the precise degree and manner of control by the unconscious, by forces which operate from below the surface of normal awareness. Thus psycho-analytic theory has the merit of turning our attention to the inner forces which freeze the free flow of energy and spontaneity and make a person psychologically cramped. But even so, valuable though the contribution of psycho-analytic theory is, a philosopher's investigations must go beyond it. The reason is that the psycho-analyst is primarily interested in a study and cure of causes of bondage and suffering which manifest themselves as "complexes" and 'mechanisms' in those who are regarded as mentally 'sick',

'mal-adjusted' "psychotics" and 'psycho-paths'. But the line between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal' is no hard and fast line but only one of convenience. To a philosopher who is concerned with an in-depth study of the very conditions of human existence and who seeks to come to grips with the problem at its very roots, such a restriction of the scope and aim of a study of freedom is entirely arbitrary. The ontology of freedom must press forward its analysis and its searching probe.

It is in this area of in-depth study of freedom that mokṣa philosophy has deep and penetrating insights to offer. At its core lies the inquiry into the nature of self. In a way it seems that the question of the self being no other than the inquiry "Who am I?" must be an utterly simple matter. It strikes one as odd that one needs to amass information in order to answer this question. For me what can be closer, more intimate than 'I'? It need not be denied that the empirical scientific approach has a place in the study of man. If, for instance, we wish to study how men behave individually and collectively and are interested in its classification, prediction and control, the scientific empirical approach has a definite utility. But when our concern is not such a utility - oriented study but a true understanding of the self, this method is too external, contrived, and superficial. Each man lives, feels

and experiences as 'I'. In place of such a round-about way there must then be available to man a direct method by which he may approach this question. 'Depth psychology' with its elaborate constructs in a vast complicated net-work of theory and views fails to provide us with such a method. In place of a direct knowledge of the self, what we have here is largely inferential and speculative tangle of views based on fitful gropings in the dark of limited pedestrian intellect.

The direct method recommended by mokṣa philosophies of Vedantic orientation (re-emphasised in recent times by, for example, Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha, Raman Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo) takes its point of departure the subject, I-the knower. The knower is not to be confused with the incessant flow of feelings, emotions, thoughts intentions, sensations and desires. These form the content of consciousness and are observed, analysed, related, understood, judged, rejected or accepted by us. These are not the self but that of which the self becomes aware. The self knows these as objects, but it should be clear that being the knower, the subject, the self cannot be just another item of the same type to be similarly observed, analysed and known. As such it remains outside the realm of the knowable. Thus whatever is capable of being presented to the knowing subject, is by that very fact less than it. To see this is to grasp the

transcendental character of I, the self. The psycho-physical organism, the desiring, willing self being itself an object to this pure subject (the witness), belongs therefore to the realm of the non-I. Through a confused identification with the contents of consciousness there arises the 'ego', the empirical self. This is only the spurious self, the false I, yet under the influence of confusion, ignorance and non-discrimination it is taken to be the true self. The pure subject, the true I, though ever present as the sākṣin to whom all the contents of consciousness are presented, yet paradoxically ever eludes the seeking, grasping mind. It ever eludes because it is searched for, sought after in the 'given', the presented, whereas it is clear that it itself is the one who searches, the one who seeks. Such is the simple yet consequential mistake that we are all perpetuating. Seeking itself but looking away from itself, whatever the self presents to itself as the self is bound to be other than the self. The self cannot be caught as an object of search, but must be realized, as no other than the seeker.

The lack of discrimination then gives rise to the mistaken identification with the contents of consciousness including the body and the mind. The body, mind, intellect, however, are all within the realm of prakṛiti and are as governed by laws as other external elements and forces of

nature. In so far as then a man is subject to such an identification, his life is marked by conditioning, rigidity, predictable movements in set patterns and absence of creativity, spontaneity and freedom. As the Gita says nature (prakriti) binds man through ignorance by creating a false I-consciousness which is the support of desire and aversion, which in turn give rise to jealousy, envy, anger, worry and anxiety etc. These then hold a man captive and toss him hither and thither, having him completely at their mercy.<sup>6</sup> Deluded and a slave to these, his behaviour is completely described and explained in terms of these forces. But for a man who is under their sway, a recognition of this fact is as difficult and elusive as their control is pervasive. Men are so engrossed day and night in doing their works within this framework, that they rarely do or can raise questions about the framework itself. They are so absorbed in the little gains and losses, ups and downs within the game that rarely do they raise questions about the quality of life as a whole, about the worthwhileness of the game itself.<sup>7</sup> Such is the reign of nature, such the strategy of the cosmic game that most people accept this natural,

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6. The Bhagvad Gita, VI, 33, 34; II, 60, 62, 63, 67.

7. Ibid, XVI, 10, 11, 12.

determined, patterned, conditioned existence as 'normal' and talk of a 'happy' life so long as the balance between their desires satisfied and desires frustrated is a positive one.<sup>8</sup> Material grain, a small dose of power, a little raising of hope, the achievement of a small ambition or one step forward towards the fulfilling of a big one, or perhaps another taste of pleasure - such are the deadly drops of honey which keep men away from a realization of their chains as chains, and away from making any efforts to break them. At this level satisfaction of desire is central and an ability to do so is freedom. But rare is the recognition that this is no true freedom; that the realm of desire is the realm of *kāla* (Time) which is death, that the wheel of existence moves on up and down and tied to it men rise and fall from one moment of hope - despair bitter-sweet delusion to another, from one existence of bondage and suffering to another. Rare is the realization that this is the hard cruel wheel of destiny on which men are broken again and again.

Not until there arises an existential felt realization of the ubiquitousness and blinding power of the superimposed ego, of the dualistic empirical I, of the fact of mis-identification, can man even begin to break from this conditioned existence. But when through discrimination one

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8. Ibid, XVI, 13, 14, 15.

rejects all the contents of consciousness as the non-self and stays in the pure witness self, a transcendence of the conditioned and unfree existence is made possible.<sup>9</sup> In this way may man transcend to the realm of true cure, release and freedom. This cure is not just a cure from the binding patterns and complexes and the consequent excessive worry and anxiety which lead to neurosis and psychosis. The aim of this cure and release is not just a kind of repair work, a patchwork done here and there to prevent the structure of social self from falling apart. Nor does it consist in averting maladjustments, a name given to those tendencies and habits of his which inconvenience or create problems for his fellow men and which thus render him 'unfit' to contribute to the social order to which he belongs. What is aimed at here on the other hand, is nothing short of a complete rooting out of the very condition of all anxiety, worry, fear and unfree living;<sup>10</sup> that condition being, as noted earlier, an identification with the ego.

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9. Ibid, X, 20, XVIII, 16, 17, Ishopanishad, 6.

10. See E.G.: "The self who is unattached to external contacts finds happiness in the Self. Being joined by Yoga to Brahman, he attains imperishable happiness." Ibid. V, 21. "He who is happy within, whose joy is within and whose light is within; that Yogin becomes Brahman and attains to the bliss of Brahman. The seers whose sins are destroyed, whose dualities are dispelled, whose selves are disciplined and who rejoice in the welfare of all beings, attain to the bliss of Brahman.

Contd...



The identification with the empirical self has deep and endless roots and it is not therefore an easy task to learn to stand apart from it altogether. One can start with practicing detachment from the relatively grosser aspects of the empirical self—the body and the vital processes. By training and practice one can extend it to the observation of emotions, feelings, thoughts and other mental processes. Essentially the process is the same. The 'witness' standing back from all contents of consciousness distinguishes itself from them as the 'pure subject'. As has been pointed out above this Self is immanent in all subject-object experience, but also as the pure subject. It transcends all. Fixing his mind on this ever calm, unsoiled and silent Self, the individual watches the rising unfolding and passing away of all mental processes. He stays aloof, unsoiled; the ever-passing spectacle of various mental processes stage their show and pass away without leaving a trace behind as birds in the sky flying away out of sight.

As this practice continues, more and more subtle aspect of the mind come to reveal themselves and lay bare before one their mysteries, their secret workings. Thus one learns

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(footnote 10 contd...)

To those holy men who have destroyed desire and anger, who have controlled their minds, who know the Self, the bliss of Brahman is near" V, 24-26 "Having Controlled the senses, mind and intelligence the sage who has liberation as his goal, who has cast away desire, fear and anger, is freed forever", V. 28. See also The Gita, II, 55-56, 71-72; X, 3; VII, 25-30, Ishopanishad, 7, 8.

of aspects of identification which generally lie hidden beneath, deep down, and extricates oneself from them. Each step in this progressive discrimination is a step toward further disentanglement and greater freedom. By constant practice it is possible to achieve a total non-identification from all mental processes, conscious sub-conscious and unconscious, of waking, dreaming or deep- sleep states. Established in the still centre, in an unbroken continuity of consciousness one experiences as a witness the variegated happenings in the waking state, the elusive and masked shows in the dreaming state and the deep unbroken silence of the deep sleep. By being it the Self is realized as not only the pure subject, witness, the ground and support of ordinary consciousness, but also as the source, substratum and the truth of all. More wonderful than all that is wonderful, it reveals itself\* as the one without the other, beyond dualities of being and non-being, knowledge and ignorance. The Unmanifest and the Undifferentiated, Dark and Mysterious, It is the father and mother of all. It has been called the Brahman and also the Atman - the true self of all. The Supreme Self though ever present, yet lies concealed to the ordinary mind.

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\* Obviously the Self does not reveal itself as an object to a subject. 'Knowledge by identity' perhaps comes closest to conveying the sense intended.

That is because entangled as it is in the ceaseless activity of ego-centered, blind machinistic thoughts and feelings, desires and aversions, the untrained mind is lost in the outer activity and thus fails to get in touch with it.

But when with a razor-sharp awareness one cuts through this mass of deadening routine activity of the particularistic ego there arises a direct, intuitive, non-mediated experience of the Self- ever free and untainted. With this arises a total awareness that is immediate, direct and non-verbal of the workings and conditioning of the mind in its totality.

When the mind is thus grasped in all its workings and aspects, its spell is broken. All that has laid hidden in the crevices, in the dark recesses now appear or are laid bare, their secrets revealed and their hold vanguard. Established in a deep impregnable peace and quietude, the person feels whole for the first time, undivided, calm but alert, ever poised to act with total spontaneity in the here and now. The particularistic ego, with its fragmenting inhibitive effect is seen to be super-imposition on the true I, the universal self.\*

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\* The ego is experienced as a super-imposition, as a 'spurious Self' by the realized (the mukta). See e.g. Talks with Sri Raman Maharishi (Sri Ramanasraman, Tiruvannawalai, India, (1968)).

With this the very roots of the ego-dominated life with its worry, anxiety and dualities are out. If impelled by some left over momentum of the past egoistic action, attachment, hatred, indifference and other little things which come in their train make their appearance for some time, they work themselves out in the periphery while the center stays still (nirvikāra). The liberated man lives ever fulfilled in his self by his self, desiring nothing, seeking nothing, avoiding nothing, free of dualities, ever in repose. All worry, anxiety and limitations having been conquered at the very source, there arises in him perfect tranquillity, love for all creatures and an unfathomable sense of wonder and joy.<sup>11</sup> Ever fulfilled, full of a deep and ecstatic bliss totally open to all experience, such a man, trully free being, onemplates the everchanging panorama of fleeting pleasures and pains, gains and losses, success and failures.<sup>12</sup> No aggression is left, no hostility, or alienation from others. Himself ever deeply content, he has boundless love and compassion for all creatures. Freed from distortion of perception and confinement to a particular psychophysical center caused by ego-centricity, he has infinite capacity to emphathise and understand and relate to

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11. The Gīta, XII, 13, Ch. XI.

12. Ibid., II, 55, 56, 5770, XII, 14; V, 21, 22, 24.

even the lowliest of the creatures<sup>13</sup> and having no ego-desires, he is constantly engaged in selfless action.<sup>14</sup> The energies of the psyche having been liberated from the clamping, constraining hold of the ego, there is a natural flow of free, spontaneous activity.

It is such utter freedom, such ineffable realization, such total release, such indescribable fulfilment, which Indian philosophers have joyfully proclaimed as no other than man's own true Self, that is the true goal of man's life.<sup>15</sup>

It may be of some interest to note that in its search for inner freedom psychotherapy also assigns a key-role to self-observation to the standpoint of the witness. According to Hans Jacobs, self-observation is a great contributory factor to the success of psychotherapy:

..... Self-observation becomes an instrument of self-change. Letting thoughts take their course,

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13. Īshopanīṣad, 6, The Gīta XII, 15; XII, 4; VII, 28.

14. The Gīta XII, 4.

15. See, e.g., the inspired verses of Sankarāchārya in Viveka Chūdāmani. Two of these I quote below. "I am neither this nor that, but one supreme, the illuminer of both, I am indeed Brahman, the one without a second, pure, devoid of interior or exterior and infinite." 492 "I am indeed Brahman, the one without a second, matchless, the Reality that has no beginning, beyond such imagination as thou & I, or this and that, the Essence of Eternal Bless, the Truth." 493.

they are brought under the magnifying glass of critical examination, being looked upon as other than the present individual, the energy frozen in them is broken and detachment reached.<sup>16</sup>

Quoting other psycho-analysts he further remarks that psycho-analysis is "a training to concentration, a school for observing one's own thoughts. The patient must be taught to do this."<sup>17</sup> In fact an initial inability to do this is in the psychoanalytic theory, what lies at the root of neurotic, psychotic complexes in the first place. If excessive guilt, pain, or shame is associated with certain incidents, events, or wishes, the patient is unable to entertain the memory or thought of such events etc. in his conscious mind. Too much identification and the consequent pain and guilt reach a degree of unbearability. Such painful intruders are therefore pushed to some dark corner, repressed into some remote parts thus causing the 'other' self.<sup>18</sup> Thus there are formed many knots, distortions, defence-mechanisms which give rise to complexes, rigidity and loss of spontaneity and freedom. The patient must be helped to develop a sense of detachment, so that he can contemplate these in a dispassionate spirit, observe

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16. Hans Jacobs: Western Psycho-therapy and Hindu Sadhana (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1961), p. 118.

17. Ibid.

18. Jung, op. cit., pp. 56-57.

them, grow sensitive to them and get above them. This is however a difficult process not only for the patient but for the psychotherapist also, for so deep in the unconscious, lie the repressed thoughts that he himself must dig deep to reach at and properly understand such roots of the problem. Thus he relies upon techniques such as hypnosis, free-association, dream-interpretation, slips of ordinary life, nervous gestures which help him to know the unconscious, to get at the heart of the matter.<sup>19</sup> He hopes to turn these into his keys to the closed chambers, so that with the help of the patient and clues from these, he may reconstruct the psychic life history of the patient. This along with the sympathetic and understanding attitude of the psychiatrist,

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19. See, e.g. Frieda Reichman, op. cit., p. (X); p. 70. A substantial part of books on psycho-analytic therapy is devoted to questions centering round interpretation of slips, errors, day-dreams, dreams, hallucinations etc. Freud clearly laid a great stress on this. See his Psychotherapy of Everyday Life For Jung's emphasis on dreams, perspective techniques for an understanding of the unconscious see., op. cit. p. 49, 51. There is no need to resort to such methods in the Indian context. As noted above, with practice a yogi can train himself to consciously witness his dreams and deep sleep; establish an unbroken continuity between the three stages of consciousness and the fourth, such a one hardly needs any help from dreams and fantasies etc. to know what is going on in some part of his mind. Regions far more secret and subtle and revealing than dreams are open before him for inspection. He scarcely needs the 'unconscious' as a source of information, "which after all" as Jacobs puts it "generally distorts so badly what it wants to express and will normally yield him little of consequence that he does not know anyhow." op. cit., p. 149.

are geared to help the patient dig out from dark corners the repressed monsters, to give him courage and support to look at them squarely, bring them under calm observation, face them and thus reduce them powerless. A certain measure of freedom is gained in this way. But whereas the Indian philosopher is interested in our taking this process all the way to its ultimate point where all identifications are broken and man is freed from all conditioning, the practice of psycho-therapy stops short at a certain stage on the way. As suggested above, its purpose is limited to a 'cure' of the individual from such complexes which make him 'abnormal' and restore to society a normal useful member.<sup>20</sup> Hence within its range are only a small fraction of the forces which make for human bondage. While identification is broken with some of the repressive thought patterns, the individual does not go beyond these to a wider deeper freedom by breaking his identification with the ego itself.

Of all the great psychologists Jung often came close to insisting that there was no reason for psychotherapy to stop at an arbitrary point and that its purpose must be conceived of in terms which go beyond health and restoration of normalcy. He talks of suffering and bondage to which all

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20. See. e.g. K.M. Colby, A Primer for Psychotherapist (New York: The Ronald Press, Co., 1951), p. 3. Also Frieda Reichman, op. cit., p. 34-35, p. 190.



of us are subjected and hopes that psychology will someday extend its scope to include a close study of and freedom from these.<sup>21</sup> Thus looking to 'ancient treasures of wisdom' and yoga in India for help, he recognised the need of transcending the ego, and discovering a new centre, he called it the 'self'. He believed that to experience and realize this self, is the ultimate aim of Indian Yoga.<sup>22</sup> But here Jung misinterprets the Self of Indian Yoga. For as against the universal Self, Ātman, the One without the other, Jung's 'Self' is interestingly still a new center of personality and the culmination of a "process of individuation."<sup>23</sup> But such a self cannot provide us with the anchor from which identifications can be broken to the very root providing man with release and freedom not only from the bondage and suffering from which the 'abnormal' suffer, but from which all of us, as human beings suffer; providing man with not only a partial and fragmented freedom, a patch-work-cure but a freedom which is complete and total. Is it the individualistic bias of western civilization that hinders the way for acceptance of a standpoint which is based on a transcendental Impersonal, Universal Self?

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21. Jung: op. cit., p. 102.

22. Ibid., p. 102.

23. Ibid., p. 102.

Finally as we have mentioned above, as the self is no other than the pure subject, the witness and substratum of all states of consciousness, one knows It by realizing one's identity with It. It can be done in one moment of clear direct, penetrating intuitive realization. In contrast the maze of theorizing, cognitive activity, abstractions, intellectualization may provide us, with in Huxley's phrase 'specious intelligibility' but that very activity of the intellect has a tendency to stand in the way of a direct immediate perception of the facts as they are. Especially may the thinking, intellectualizing activity of the mind be a barrier to a direct experience of the sākṣin, the chinmātra; the ever-present and ever fulfilled witness. To get in touch with that one must leave behind all theorizing and conceptual moulds. In the second chapter of The Gīta, Krishna advises Arjuna that so long as the intellect is caught up in the mire of theories and doctrines, he will miss the clear direct perception of the truth. In this sense all knowledge and thought explanation have only a subsidiary place in Mokṣa philosophy. Their function is to show, to indicate, to point to the One beyond. One who has directly experienced by being it, the still center, the witness self, the most wonderful of all wonders, has as little need for scriptures and doctrines as at the time of floods men have for little ponds and lakes.<sup>24</sup>

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24. The Gīta, II, 46.

## Chapter Nine

### SĀKṢIN AND THE PROBLEM OF JĪVANMUKTI

The possibility of jīvan-mukti, on advaitic principles has conventionally been discussed from the metaphysical - epistemological point of view. It is said that in Advaita, Brahman, the Ultimate Reality is of the nature of undifferentiated Absolute where no distinctions of any sort exist. The world of multiplicity and individual egos are only appearances due to avidyā or ignorance of the Ultimate Truth. When through śravaṇa, manana and nidhidyāsana the sādhaṅka\* attains through Brahmākāra vṛtti\*\* the knowledge of Brahman, the world of multiplicity is annulled as illusion, and the individual self merges into Brahman, becomes one with it. This is the attainment of mokṣa : It implies the cessation of avidyā and therefore of the world-appearance and separate egos. Mokṣa\*\*\* and avidyā are incompatible; also cessation of avidyā and continuation of world of multiplicity are incompatible. Therefore bodily existence and a limited ego are incompatible with mokṣa. Thus there can be no mokṣa in life. Avidyā having been destroyed, there is no world or body to the realized man.

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Sākṣin : The witness self

Jīvanmukti: Liberation in life

\* Spiritual aspirant

\*\* The state of consciousness that produces knowledge of the Absolute by an identification with It.

\*\*\* Liberation, absolute freedom from limitation and suffering

A similar formulation from the point of view of nirvikalpa samādhi\* has also been made. Vedāntic sādhanā,\*\* it is held finds its culmination in Nirvikalpa samādhi where the avidyā \*\*\* having been completely destroyed, the individual merges with the Brahman; the world of multiplicity is completely sublated and no experience exists of anything by anyone. There is no one to know or experience, and there is nothing to be known or experienced. It is a state of complete cessation of all differentiations. But the fact is that there are many realised men who have had this vision in a state of nirvikalpa samādhi and who return so to say from this state of Absolute Oneness and non-differentiation. But the question is how can their return be explained? Realization of Brahman in nirvikalpa samādhi requires that avidyā be eradicated. But if avidyā has been eradicated, how is the re-emergence of the world and some sort of ego to be explained? A recourse to prārabdha etc. does not seem satisfying as prārabdha<sup>+</sup>, karma, etc. all are off-shoots of avidyā, and cannot be said to be effective in the absence of that. And yet, unless these

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\* State of homogenous undifferentiated consciousness

\*\* Spiritual discipline

\*\*\* nescience

+ That part of the past karma of an individual which has begun to bear fruit.

great souls did come out of nirvikalpa samādhi and lived in the world, there would be no teachers of advaita, and no living testimony to the truth of advaita. Thus the problem.

In my view the solution of this problem requires a somewhat different understanding of the nature of ultimate Reality and Avidyā than the one that is assumed in the posing of the problem as outlined above. Although we are dealing with advaita, the nature of Ultimate Reality in the above is interpreted as monistic, not advaitic. The idea of monism suggests that there is only one reality, stark, pure, simple and there is nothing else. If there appears anything else than Brahman it must be regarded as illusion, insubstantial, bereft of any reality or existence. However, we have to note that the world of multiplicity and egos cannot be regarded as absolutely non-existent or even as a mere illusion. It is not of the same ontological order as prātibhāsika.\* The term used even by Śaṅkara is mithyā, which we may interpret to mean that the world of plurality does not have a self-existent, independent reality. Advaita may properly speaking be taken to mean not absolute non-existence of multiplicity and duality, but negation of absoluteness or irremediability of multiplicity, a rejection of the reality of the world and egos as independent, discreet entities in and by themselves unrelated to the

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\* As in dream, illusion.

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Absolute Brahman. Advaita is assertion of an integral vision in which multiplicity and duality are experienced but as grounded in, as manifestations of the self, which is the self of all; the Truth of all phenomena.

If we have this conception of a-dvaita then nirvikalpa samādhi may not be regarded as the highest stage in advaita sādhanā but something lesser-perhaps a step prior to the highest. In nirvikalpa samādhi the Absolute, Self-existing nature of the self is experienced, but in a simplified situation: the experience of the world and the egos is obliterated. As the removal of confusing things and factors helps us in seeing a thing in its simplicity and pure nature, similarly the cluttering projection of the world of multiplicity is removed so that the sādhanika has a clear vision. As after once realizing that the mirage is only sand appearing as water, a person is not deceived by the mirage and yet the appearance of sand as water is not cancelled, so also the fullness of realization does not annul the world experience, but places the world in the right perspective as expression of and no different in essence from the Brahman, the One Reality.

viewed thus, the return from the nirvikalpa samādhi is not a return to lower levels of existence requiring explanation, rather having given the sādhanika the true vision in isolation of the self-same Reality that forms the roof and

warp of all experience, it must lead the sādḥaka to the true and complete advaitic realization - in which the Brahman is seen not in stark identity and isolation, but with the world experience, pervading it through and through. Only then may his realization be considered to be complete, flowering in a state of saḥaj samādhi.

The turning inward and sādhanā of viveka (ātma- anātma viveka, discrimination between the self and the not-self) rejection of this and that as not self, and as mithyā, results in nirvikalpa samādhi where all else is sublated and only the Self remains. But having followed the path of contraction, and inwardness, viveka and rejection, the sādḥaka must reap the point of fullness by the path of expansion - so that the world returns even though no more as an other to be feared or vanquished, but only as an apparent other, another expression of my own self to be loved and revelled in.

What then is the nature and role of avidyā in advaita Vedānta? Multiplicity, differentiation, individuation these as such do not necessarily imply avidyā, but, to view them as disparate, discreet, self-existing, having a reality of their own - that is avidyā. Negation of avidyā and realization of mokṣa thus does not annul the multiplicity, but it provides the vision of the one-in-the many, the one in which the many are embedded, one in which the many are held,

one of which they are all expressions; one by whose Reality all are. The difference between the suffering, bound person and the realized, liberated man, then, does not lie in that for the realized man there is no world or multiplicity, and for the unrealized man there is; but in that one has a larger, inclusive vision in which the world and selfs are seen held together in one self of whose manifestations they all are, the other takes the apparent otherness of things and people as real. This may be described as a-dvaitic view of ultimate Reality and liberation, pointing to the one non-dual Self as the basis and truth of duality which is regarded as apparent. In the, what may be described as eliminative view, even the appearance of duality is annulled and held incompatible with Realization. In this view, Realization is a state of pure, undifferentiated, homogenous consciousness; it is not consciousness of anything, analogous to deep dreamless sleep. Emergence of any objects of experience, and the ego is a coming down, a sign of avidyā which will qualify absolute freedom, mokṣa. There is nothing to be experienced and no one to experience in a dualistic mode - blankness as far as experience is concerned.

The inclusive view on the other hand has the support of many passages from śruti. There are the celebrated Upaniṣadic statements: "Sarvam Khalu idam brahma" (All this in-



-deed is Brahman), 'Isāvasyamidam Sarvam', (All this is pervaded by the Lord), and also the Isopaniṣad's insistence that the sādḥaka must know both vidyā and avidyā, sambhūti\* and asambhūti.\*\* Further, 'when he sees Oneness of self in all things, where then is room for grief or delusion?' (Īs a - 7), 'for one who knows ātman, Brahma is in the front, Brahma in the back, right, left, above below.... all is Brahma for him' (Mundaka, II, Īs'a 11) 'the knower of ātman realizes that he himself is all' (Br. I. 4.10), 'ātman is the inner dweller (antaryāmin) of earth, air, fire, akāsa, of all.....' (Br. III.7) and so on.

As we have seen above, the inclusive view of mokṣa resulting in universal vision of Self or Brahman as all, 'vāsudevah sarvamiti' (all here is the Lord), presents no problem regarding jīvanmukti. Some account of the ways of a jīvan-mukta may be in order.

Having the cosmic vision of the self, the realized man may regard the whole world of apparent duality as līla, the motiveless play of the Ānanda\*\*\* aspect of the supreme. He is no longer deluded by the apparent otherness of the phenomenal

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\* the manifest

\*\* the unmanifest

\*\*\* Bliss, Absolute Delight

world, and shares in this ānanda. Rāga, dveṣa, moha,\* fear, anger, sorrow, can no more be his. Rāga/dveṣa require a delusion that duality is ultimate and not only apparent, a part of the playful creative expression of the one. Thus the jñāni \*\* who has the cosmic vision is free, mukta. Having realized that all is Brahman, he himself is the Brahman (aham Brahma asmi), he knows that there is no true duality. Behind the apparent duality is the ultimate non-dual Self-the Brahman.

Because he knows that the duality is only apparent and not ultimate, he is free: mukta, free from attachment and aversion (rāga, dveṣa) and bondage and suffering. But also because the otherness, even though apparent and seen through, is allowed, seeing, hearing, knowing, acting, all are possible. That is, jīvanmukti is possible.

It may be doubted that the otherness, multiplicity when seen, understood, realized as apparent, may still bind a man, cause him suffering. But can we expect a person to be afraid of a rope which appears as a snake but which he knows is a rope? Shall he run after mirage to quench his thirst having known fully well that there is only sand and no water? Shall he be afraid of or be angry with myriad mirror-reflections of his own? Nay, the life of a person who has seen through the

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\* Rāga - attachment; dveṣa - aversion; moha - delusion

\*\* Man of knowledge.

delusion must get transformed, change drastically. He cannot be afraid of something that he knows to be a form of his own, a manifestation of his very self. He cannot suffer from rāga and dveṣa, knowing all creatures to be he himself in disguise.

But how would such a man live? Is it possible for a person to have a knowledge of the true oneness of all and yet behave, act live as if they are different?

A number of possibilities obtain:

- (1) Having experienced the tremendous relief, freedom, and ānanda which is brought about by the knowledge of the one, true, non-dual self that is the ground and support, the reality of all, the jñānī lives full of ānanda, established in the cosmic vision, but outwardly continues to live appropriately to the mask he wears in the form of the body that others associate him with. This would be analogous to role-playing: making appropriate movements as required by the role, carrying on the vyavahāra behaving just as the ordinary man does, showing concern, care, anger, etc., but inwardly established in the realization which makes all this a mere play-acting for him. Such a person may appear just as any ordinary man, to a superficial observer.
- (2) Or going through the activities appropriate to the role he remains not only inwardly calm and undisturbed,

firmly established in his vision, but also appears as a sthita-prajna\* to others. Even in the first case, the jñānī is a sthitaprajna, all jñānīs because of their vision must be sthitaprajnas, the difference is only of what they choose to manifest, how they choose to appear outwardly, as an ordinary man, a sthitaprajna, as if mad, or intoxicated, as a child or as a fool, as a celebrated verse about the jñānīs says.

- (3) Alternatively, as suggested above, the jñānī or the bhakta with universal vision may disregard the otherness completely since it is only apparent and let his outward behaviour be also in harmony with his vision. In that case he will be like one intoxicated making no distinctions which are required in vyavahāra and thus be completely impractical. He sees Self or God in all and this vision fills his consciousness completely, there is no place for the empirical ego- it cannot function. If this happens uninterrupted there may be a problem of survival of his body even, and others will have to take care of him. Or, as Paramhansa Rāmakrishna used to say, he may deliberately keep his consciousness down to a somewhat lower level or keep an 'as-if' ego so that he may be able to function. However, every now and then, the consciousness

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\* Man of steadfast wisdom.

may soar to merge in the Brahman, and during these times, as in the case of Paramhansa, body-consciousness would disappear and the jñānī would have to be taken care of. Then there are cases of men of realization who, nevertheless, present a very rough exterior. As a matter of fact, it is impossible for us to decide in what different manners will men of realization act and behave in the world. There is no uniformity here, a rich variety is there. They flower in their own ways.

Yet, it appears that whatever manner they may adopt externally, the realization of Self, would mean a fundamental change in their self image, their sense of identity. It would mean an end to dehātmabhāva,\* and as such the view of the self as bhoktā\*\* and kartā.\*\*\* The world of manifoldness and activities involving the apparently many egos, each having primarily a body as its nucleus takes the form of a play, līla as mentioned above, of the one masquerading as many. The jñānī's view of the world remains that of a witness, a sākṣī.+ As a sākṣī he watches the cosmic show, the play of

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\* Taking the body to be the Self.

\*\* One who experiences pleasure, pain etc.

\*\*\* doer

+ The witness self.

the Ultimately one and phenomenally many. This vision makes it impossible for him to take himself as a real doer or bhoktā - even though as we have mentioned above, he may in some cases take on the mask of a kartā (doer) and bhoktā.\* Thus we may have the conception of a jīvan-mukta as one firmly established in the witness consciousness whereas the bound man has his self image as a bhoktā and kartā, as the limited ego.

We have seen above that witness consciousness may be considered to underlie whatever life-style a jīvanmukta may adopt outwardly. Below we wish to consider the place of witness consciousness from the point of view of sādhanā.

In the realized man, there is an effortless and spontaneous ascent of the mind to the witness consciousness and knowledge of the one. Brahman as the true self rules out egoistic identification with the body-mind organism, with the bhoktā and kartā self. But in the case of a sādhanaka, such a non-identification from the ego and a firm establishment in the witness consciousness has not as yet been attained. Thus he is subject to the misery and bondage which is a consequent of egoistic involvement with the body and mind.

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\* One who experiences pleasure, pain etc.

However, the witness remains relevant here also, in this case in the form of witness sādhanā. This consists in a practice where the sādḥaka sets aside some period of time in which he regularly endeavours to take the calm, detached, un-involved attitude of a witness or a sākṣī. While practising sākṣī bhāva (the witness attitude), the sādḥaka eschews all judgements, comments, liking or disliking, agreement or disagreement, and only calmly watches the different items as they make their appearance and then disappear in the ever eventful theatre of the mind. The psychotherapeutic value of the witness sādhanā has been noticed by psychologists. (cf. Hindu Sādhanā & Western Psychotherapy by Hans Jacobs).

In this way the sādḥaka gets progressively established in the witness attitude: as the various complexes and knots of the mind appear and get dissolved, he experiences greater and greater freedom and the natural delight of Being. The periods of sākṣī bhāva are the periods of freedom, cessation of bondage and misery. This is because as we shall also see below, the witness attitude and the bhoktā stand are incompatible and all bondage is the result of bhoktā attitude. The periods of sākṣī-bhāva play an important role in the life of a sādḥaka. They give him a foretaste of mokṣa, and save sādhanā from becoming a long waiting, in which the present is sacrificed for the sake of happiness in some future. sākṣī-bhāva brings mokṣa close to us, pervade and transforms our

day to days activity with freedom and ānanda. For, as the sādḥaka becomes an adept in this practice, periods of meditation act as the centre from which spread waves in all directions of ever-widening arcs. Their effects begin to linger on till the sādḥaka is firmly established in the witness consciousness which brings to him the Universal vision of the all pervasiveness of Self, and the apparentness of the other and the multiplicity. What happens to the limited ego? The limited ego requires the other from which it is distinguished. Now in this case, unlike in nirvikalpa samādhi, the world does not disappear. Does it mean that correspondingly the ego also does not disappear? It may be held that in the cosmic ideal, just as the world does not disappear, only its otherness is seen as apparent, so also the ego also does not disappear, but its limitedness is seen only as apparent in fitness with the cosmic game: where the objects and the subject both have a reality that is part of the Ultimate. That is to say the world of objects and the limited ego, both stay but not as independent and separated by each other by an unbridgable gulf, but rather as apparently different manifestations of the same self. As such the life play goes on as before: even though the Realization has internally made the sādḥaka free. Established in the true Self he watches the limited ego as a phenomenon cast in a certain role in the drama of life - which has got only Self as its stage and screen. The apparent



multiplicity and differentiation as subjects - objects etc. are all part of the same grand show - all playing a role in the cosmic drama - līlā. He is the stage, the actor, He the eater, He the eaten, He himself is all.

## II

Let us raise this problem and attempt an investigation from the point of view of somewhat different but allied issues. If bondage means attachment/aversion (rāga, dveṣa), and consequent hope, fear, anger, desire, suffering; and mokṣa means freedom from attachment/aversion, and from dependence and suffering consequent upon them; the question is: Is it possible for an embodied being to be free of bondage? What makes it a serious question is the fact that embodied existence suggests a limited ego; a limited ego is necessarily tied to rāga/dveṣa, pain, pleasure, fear, etc. which means bondage suffering and therefore no mokṣa. If on the other hand it is maintained that through sādhanā bondage and suffering are eradicated, and with that the ego, then the problem is that ego appears to be necessarily demanded for the normal functions of life such as perception, and action. With ego-death, all activities on the part of the jñānī would become impossible, the functioning and continuance of the body would become problematic and jīvanmukti impossible.

Below I wish to put forward a brief elucidation of these points and suggest how jīvanmukti may be considered to be possible for a sādḥaka.

Ego death is a requirement for mokṣa as there can not be an end to the limitations and misery of man as long as he functions at the level of limited bhoktā ego. The reason is that there is a necessary connection between ego and pain, pleasure, hope, fear, misery and dependence which are the opposite of mokṣa. The relationship holds both ways: rāga and dveṣa and the resultant suffering imply an ego, as there cannot be rāga/dveṣa without an ego, conversely ego necessarily gives rise to rāga/dveṣa and the life of bondage.

To see this we shall have to investigate into the nature of consciousness, ego, bondage and suffering etc. Let us begin with something close at hand, say my consciousness of the pen with which I am writing. I say, I am conscious of the pen, it is red, long, tapered, old, good to write with etc. While I am conscious of the pen and its qualities, I by no means attribute to my consciousness these qualities. My consciousness is not red, long, tapered, old, good to write with etc. In that sense my consciousness of pen is not tarnished by what it is that is in the field of consciousness. But suppose the seeing of this pen creates in me a feeling of joy or its opposite sadness, as it may stimulate in me some

pleasant or unpleasant memories. What about this pain or pleasure that the pen may produce in me? Are not pleasure and pain (anger, fear etc.) objects of consciousness, 'known', just as the qualities of a pen are? In that case just as a long white thing does not make the knowing subject long and white, so may we not say that the pain or pleasure as objects, known in the field of consciousness also do not affect consciousness? However, here the question arises whether one can be conscious of pain (pleasure, fear, anger etc.) without attributing this pain to oneself, or does the knowing subject remain unaffected by the known pain as in the case of whiteness of a pen? Can the knowledge of pain be there without the knower being in some way a subject of that pain? Or does the knowledge of pain, consciousness of pain imply the pain having being attributed to the subject? Can there be pain without there being a feeling that I am in pain? Or can the two be separated?

Of course, that I can be conscious of pain as an objective fact is not a problem in the case of a third person. Let's say there is some one in front of me. He has a visible wound in his leg - it is bleeding. He is holding it with both his hands and looks desperate and in tears. Well, I am conscious of this pain - it may produce in me a sympathetic feeling of distress or misery, anger at those

who have done this to him or resentment; or I have a callous heart and I pass it by without a flutter; or the fellow is my worst enemy and I observe this with glee. And of course, there are many people in pain without my being conscious of it, without my knowing about them. So, in the third person case, there can be pain without my being conscious of it, and of course, I may be conscious of a person's pain without my experiencing pain. But the questions arise regarding the first person case: (a) Can there be pain without my being conscious of it? (b) Can I be conscious of this experience as that of pain without attributing it to myself i.e., without saying/admitting that I am in pain? Of particular relevance in the present case is case (b). For it has relevance to such questions e.g., whether experience of pain and being realized are compatible. The realized ones are said to dissociate themselves from the body, in which case they may very well take a third person attitude to the body and happenings/events in it. That is unobjectionable, but the question is whether he will in such a case experience pain. Experience of sensations he will have, but when somebody says with reference to his body that there is pain here, would it be possible for him to describe some experience as pain without some identification with the body? In describing it as 'pain' and not in any other mental terms, a reference to an ego and that the said event has a negative

value to it is implied. Without reference to an ego, sensations or events can only be defined in neutral terms, but not as pain, pleasure, anger, fear etc. That is why the realized ones are said to be equanimous and free from those emotions.

Pain & pleasure, liking and disliking, satisfaction, frustration, fear, anger, ambition, jealousy, envy all of these imply an ego. Can there be fear without reference to a perceived threat to a limited ego? Same is true of ambition, jealousy, anger etc. They all involve a reference to the ego and its desires, ideas, opinions etc. Nor can there be desire without egoistic involvement. For a desire to arise, there must be a limited self which seeks something, object, state, person which is outside it and which it does not possess and the acquiring of which it considers necessary for its happiness. Desire has, necessarily a reference to a desiring, wanting incomplete ego.

It may be objected that we talk of non-selfish or non-egoistic desires. If all desires involve a reference to the ego, then how is this to be explained? This may be settled in the following manner.

By the use of an expression such as non-egoistic, non-selfish desire etc., we wish to convey that the person wishes to do, attain something not for the pleasure, comfort

or convenience of the agent, but for reasons, other than these. It could be for reasons of duty, love of country or fellow human beings, alleviation of others' misery, friendship, love, compassion etc. In case of duty, friendship, country and other such concepts clearly a reference to the ego is very much present. He wishes to do something in accordance with his notions of duty etc. The case of compassion and universal love may not fall in it but then perhaps we hardly speak of desire in this context. His actions flow from love and compassion, not from any desire, even non-egoistic ones.

From the above it should be clear that pain, misery, suffering, emotions, desires, imply a limited bhoktā ego. On the other hand a limited bhoktā ego is also a sufficient condition of suffering and bondage. Rāga and dveṣa mature in desire, anger, jealousy, hatred, hope and fear etc. As such they amount to suffering and lack of freedom. There cannot be rāga, dveṣa without there being an ego, for they imply reference to an experiencing centre who likes or dislikes stimuli, objects, events or persons. But also conversely, a limited ego must lead to rāga and dveṣa. Let us see this with reference to the body. When I identify myself with the body, and thus limit self by reference to a body, the nature of body, the point of view of the body divides the world into positive and negative, favourable or

unfavourable and create, attachment for the one and aversion for the other. The human body, requires a certain amount of food, sleep, rest and activity. Man develops liking for objects which fill his innate needs or drives and disliking for those which hinder them. We know how in human society, in addition to the primary objects of satisfaction, a vast number of other activities and objects are developed, whose basis may nevertheless be the primary needs - the gourmet clubs and the culinary arts, romantic love and a whole world of arts, culture, activities centred around the sexual drive, and so on. From identification with the body there arise pleasure and pain at the satisfaction or otherwise of the body's needs and natural inclinations. It would be the same if someone were to define his ego, by reference to not the body, but say vitality, intellect, or even relationship to God. Identified with the intellect, I would derive satisfaction at the exercise, nourishment and development of my intellectual abilities, and would be unhappy if they were to be starved, ill-nourished and under-exercised. I would have a preference, a *vāsanā* \* for people, institution, conditions which allowed me an exercise and play of thought and a dislike for its reverse.

From the above, it is clear that mokṣa or liberation which must exclude misery, suffering, limitations, implies

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\* A subtle desire

cessation or absence of ego, ego-death (at least an apparent ego must be granted to account for felt-bondage; thus ego-death would be meaningful even if though the ego is regarded as transcendently mithyā).

But if mokṣa necessarily implies a complete cessation of ego, then it appears that mokṣa sādhanā would culminate in nirvikalpa samādhi and no room is left for jivan muktī, the reason is that some form of ego appears to be necessary not only for rāga, dveṣa, fear, anger etc. which we wish to eliminate for mukti, but also for perception, action, knowledge without which we cannot conceive of living.

Take, e.g. action. Action implies an agent, it implies reference to the purpose or desire, ability, effort, destination, motivation of a doer. If the I-sense, ego is totally dead, can a person undertake any action? Can even the simple, routine actions which are minimally necessary to maintain the body be performed without an ego, some sense of 'I'? Indeed at the subtle levels of consciousness and saṃskāras,\* the *raison d'être* for the coming together of various elements to form a body and a personality, and the continuation of it, lies in the structure of an ego. When this ego has been completely dissolved, the glue which holds all the

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\* Impressions, dispositions left on the mind by past actions etc.



constituent parts of the personality together so to say, has been dissolved and the personality may be expected to get scattered. Some such thing is indeed recognised in the tradition for it is said that in the case of a realized soul, where the ego has been dissolved fully, there is no reason left for the body or the personality to continue, but it may hold together for some time to exhaust the effects of the *prārabdha*. When that is also exhausted, the body and the body-centred personality drops. The cause for further emergence of a personality having being removed, no further rebirths need take place. Once the left-over effect of the *prārabdha* has been exhausted, the realized soul may 'take on', 'keep', some sort of ego- that of a *bhakta*,\* *jñānī*, or *karma yogī*,\*\* a *yogī* etc. for the benefit of mankind. Their actions, life-style, etc. would display a colour, a hue, which is in harmony with the role taken. The '*bhakta*' will show *rāga* and *dveṣa* where appropriate, the '*karma yogī*' will show proper 'concern' and 'effort' for certain 'ends', the *jñāna yogī* will show equanimity, peace, joy, the characteristics of a *sthitaprajna*.

Elimination of ego would rule out not only action but also perception. Without a conscious center which receives

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\* Devotee

\*\* One who is engaged in action for non-selfish reasons.

the impressions, stores, classifies, refers to, brings this to bear upon future occasions, perception would not be possible. A finite, individuating conscious centre, the nucleus for interaction with the 'world', in other words an 'ego' is required.

We have seen then that without ego, action, sense-perception, even the bare survival of the psychophysical organism becomes problematic. Indeed a denial of ego seems to amount to a denial of life, thought and experience as we know it ordinarily. It may be noted here that the deep dreamless sleep state, devoid of any thoughts, etc. is often cited as analogous to the state of realization devoid of an ego. In the dreamless deep sleep state, the functions of the ego are suspended; in samādhi realization, ego is annihilated.

If the above holds then it should follow that state of complete, total realization in which the ego is totally annihilated will not result in 'jīvanmukti', but in videh-mukti\*. Thus the problem arises once again from this perspective.

The ideal of jīvanmukti requires the possibility of experience, subject-object, and other distinctions, action, and so on all of which as we have seen above require a self. But the ego as the self because of its intimate relationship with rāga/dveṣa and suffering would negate mokṣa. Hence the problem. Either we have mokṣa, but no life (as bodily

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\* Liberation without body.

existence), or we have bodily existence but no mokṣa. This might be a serious setback for a sādḥaka of advaitic conviction. Is there a way out?

It might be instructive to explore the idea of the witness self in this context. If our resort to the witness is to make jīvanmukti possible, the witness standpoint must be seen to be incompatible with rāga/dveṣa and the resultant emotions, desire - inspired actions, bondage and suffering - so that the expression jīvanmukti is significant for the mukti component; at the same time though referring to a self, it must not refer to the absolute self in which all distinctions merge, including the appearance of the world, others, objects, body and subject object experience at all levels, leaving only the state of nirvikalpa samādhi.

### III

First of all we must re-state briefly the idea of witness consciousness. The concept of the witness becomes available to us when we closely scrutinize experience. Witness refers to the abiding consciousness which is distinct from the contents of consciousness and reveals their appearance and disappearance - knowledge and ignorance. It underlies the perception of an object and its absence, unaffected by the fleeting sensations or the stream of events. This abiding,

background consciousness, the still point of eternity, unchanging witness of all makes possible the knowledge of all objects.

Could the witness standpoint and emotive reactive consciousness co-exist? That is can one be said to be a witness and at the same time experience emotions of pleasure, pain, liking and disliking etc. As in the case of pain discussed above, there is no difficulty about the third person undergoing these emotions and I being witness to it. But can I be said to be a witness when I am myself going through such emotions? If yes, we would have to assume two selves, one the sufferer, the other the witness. It appears that we can certainly say some such thing as I am witnessing the rise of fear, anger, etc. But, in having such emotions (liking, disliking etc.) have I not ceased to be a witness? The fact that there is liking or disliking of something, shows that there is an ego with reference to which it is liked or disliked, by whom it is liked or disliked. How can there be, as in case of pain, emotions without there being a limited ego?

However it is possible that the standpoint of a limited ego is given up, and one establishes himself in a pure, witnessing consciousness alone. Then there will be awareness, experience of various sensations, events inner and outer, but no pain or pleasure, liking or disliking. And the limited

ego which provides the framework for such judgements would have dissolved itself. Such a witness consciousness would remain unaffected by the contents of mind, its presence is also not dependent on presence of any specific objects for it is witness to their absence also.

While the witness consciousness would remain unaffected by the fleeting contents of mind, its presence would mean a change, a transformation in the nature of the mind. For such emotions, thoughts and feelings which imply the presence of a limited ego, i.e., which arise only if there is the limited ego would not arise any more. Correspondingly, many actions which spring from such feelings and emotions would also cease. In other words, it would of necessity transform the life of a person.

We have said above that the abiding witness consciousness is required to explain our knowledge of fleeting sensations, ideas etc. Over and above specific cases of knowledge, bits of consciousness of changing contents, there must be an abiding, substratum consciousness. Only then can there be an awareness of a sequence, of their appearance and disappearance, their presence or absence and their relationships to each other. As such the witness consciousness is abiding, ever present, the permanent substratum of changing perceptions, ideas and emotions etc. It must be said to be

present not only in realized selves but also the ordinary human beings. The most ordinary egoistic mind also moves, exists and has its being in this wide, silent, calm, unmoving consciousness. This being so, in what manner must we understand our remarks above that the presence of the witness self transforms the person? The witness self means the dissolution of the limited egoistic self, and there is incompatibility of witness self ~~with~~ emotions and sentiments etc. which imply ego. In other words the abiding, permanent substratum nature of this pure consciousness makes it everpresent, abiding even while the ego-consciousness prevails; on the other hand it is the witness consciousness which is said to change and transform the person and free him from the emotions and sufferings of a limited mind. This is the hall-mark of realization. So, the question arises what is the nature of realization? What sort of action/effort/sādhana is required and how is it to be understood in the light of above considerations. Also the witness self, witness consciousness remains unaffected by whatever goes on in the field sphere of the empirical ego. If it is so un-affected, what is the meaning of effort, striving, sādhana etc.? In what sense is sādhana, which is of necessity done by the ego relevant to this self?

There are two ways to tackle this problem. One, the witness self, and the experiencing, suffering self are both

co-existent. The suffering is to the ego, as it remains confined to making judgements, it continues to taste the bitter-sweet fruit, depending on the pleasing or displeasing characteristics of the objects and experiences. The witness self merely watches on, the ego is not awakened to the presence of the witness and lives a limited fragmented life. As the Upaniṣad says, 'there are two birds; companions and friends, living on the same tree (of body). One is busy tasting the fruit of the tree, while the other merely watches on. When tired of the futile cycle of sweet/bitter taste, the bird stops and merely contemplates on the on-looker bird; lo and behold he himself finds his unity with it, he becomes just as the other bird, with golden plumage, serene in itself and sovereign of all that it surveys.' There is then this difference between the realized self and non-realized self; the former having awakened to the witness, pure consciousness, has shed its experiencing (bhoktā) nature, while the latter is oblivious to it. Nothing new is gained so to say, only a recognition of what is already there; this existential, meaningful recognition, awakening is all that is the end if sādhanā. sādhanā is required to remove the cobwebs of confusion and ignorance and to appreciate one's true identity, for in the recognition of pure consciousness the ego drops, making room for the presence and power of the true self. A shift in identity marks this recognition. For if it were to

be recognised, one were awakened to it, there would of necessity occur a shift in one's identity, one's notion and experience of oneself. For the self is essentially a subject, it is inconceivable to view it as other than subject, as an object. So while the ego with the pain & pleasure etc. attributed to it is rendered as an object when the individual recognises the presence of the witness self, the 'I' sense must shift from the body-based limited ego (which has now been objectified, or say been discriminated as the non-self) to the witness self. This is of course, as it should be, because there can be no release or freedom without the self being freed. The shift in I- sense to the unaffected, abiding, substratum, ever present witness of all experiences, of the waking as well as other states of consciousness releases the individual fully. As his identity shifts to a totally unaffected pure witness, pain and pleasure and other such discriminations remain no more for they require, are not possible without a sense of limited I. The person established in the witness self, would experience every thing without the jamming and jarring notes of ego- inspired likes and dislikes. For though ego be a necessary condition for aversion and attachment, it is not for pure experience, pure awareness.

The other way is to consciously work for a change in consciousness. The attachment/aversion modes create disturbance and clutter: indeed they constitute the core of



the ego structure. Without attachment/aversion and the consequent ramifications, there will only be a mirroring of objects in a calm and undisturbed consciousness, pure experience, with the quality of pure bliss and peace- a quality of entirely different nature. The quality of experience will change drastically. Life will be simple, uncluttered, free of anxiety, hostility, fear and pettiness. The witness self is ever free; but the bondage and suffering is not to the witness self and it is the bound self which is to attain liberation. For liberation it is not enough that there is a mere theoretical, somnambulistic assent to the necessity of an underlying witness self.

It is a living, vibrant awakened witness which is incompatible with the dualistic limited ego. A person may be totally oblivious, or unself-conscious of this truth about himself- this ignorance of the most important truth about himself causes suffering. Until it is removed, the individual continues to live a small life notwithstanding the truth of his Great Self. The difference in the two ways mentioned above is a difference in sādhanā. In one case, a living intense awareness of truth brings immediate realization; in the other, the blocks to a realization of the True Self are removed by equanimity. Consciousness with judgements and discriminations and the whole way of life governed by it yield to consciousness without discriminations.

The above should dispel any doubts about the witness state as that of freedom from bondage and suffering worthy of being aspired after. Its incompatibility with attachment/aversion and its progenies guarantee that. We must turn now to other questions: questions regarding the sense in which it is a self, an I; and how precisely it makes for survival of the body and actions.

To recapitulate, the witness is pure consciousness not having any preferences, experiences of liking and disliking etc. For we have seen above that he cannot be both a bhoktā and a witness. One who experiences misery cannot be a witness—the experience of misery implies a limited suffering ego, while the witness is a calm, dispassionate observer. It appears as if we can speak of a calm, dispassionate witnessing of pain, anger and fear. But on close attention we see this to be not true. That something, an event or sensation, is experienced as pain, fear, anger etc. shows that there has been a slippage from the witness-stand. To a witness events are experienced as neutral, the sensations they produce are viewed in a neutral manner, as mere sensations not as sensations that produce liking and disliking. Thus the idea of witness suggests that we may think of an individuation in such a manner that it makes possible the experiencing seeing, hearing, touching, thinking, resolving, acting, but without emotional involvement or

appraisal, a judgement in terms of pleasure and pain. The witness self experiences, sees, thinks, acts, but without any attachment, suffering, fear or anger. Rather, more precisely he watches the seeing, thinking, acting, without the idea that it is he who sees, thinks, acts etc. This would be possible only if it could be shown that without an ego, self, which does or attributes to itself the doing of all these, these functions are possible. However, the witness self, being the witness obviously cannot attribute to self the 'actor' nature. If we must have a doer self we shall have to posit another self - the two birds the one who tastes and the other who looks on. But as we have said above: as long as the bhoktā self is active, the witness exists, but as unrealized, unrecognised but nevertheless abiding consciousness. Untill recognised, its existence does nothing as far as removal of limitations is concerned. Even when it is accepted as a result of thought, or analysis, as a necessity of thought or reflection, it is yet powerless. Only when it is seen so to say, 'recognised', realized as one's own Self; so that there is a shift in one's identity, is the problem resolved. In other words the pure, abiding, choiceless awareness, must be realized as 'I', not as an objective identity. Where then is a place for two selves: the experiencer and the witness? With the witness self, alone then, a self that does nothing, what happens to seeing,

thinking, resolving, doing? We must see then if seeing etc. can remain with the self that is only a witness.

Though action, thought etc. are not possible without a self (as noted above), what is required is not necessarily an agent self; even a witness self will do. If there is no self at all & there is only the undifferentiated consciousness as in nirvikalpa samādhi that would make all action impossible. The idea of self even as a mere witness will save these functions.

One of the ways in which this may be explained is thus: The self is different from the body mind, intellect etc. (the five sheaths e.g.), when there is non-discrimination between the self and the body, mind etc., the latter function as guided and controlled, in the channels provided by the saṃskāras of this apparatus. The functioning of this apparatus is not caused by a 'limited self' 'ego', but its functioning in its characteristic manner, ego-centred way is so determined. Non-discrimination and ignorance about one's self is not responsible for the very functioning of the body-mind but for the direction it takes, the manner and the purpose of its functioning. When as a result of vivek, the self realizes its true witness nature, the interference of the ego ceases, allowing the body mind intellect etc. to work out their tendencies in a smooth and frictionless manner, the

directions which have been determined by their samskāras. There is, then, no cessation of their functions, immediately. But if it is agreed that the samskāras are produced by the egoistic desires etc. in the absence of such an ego, no new samskāras will be made, and so when the previous samskāras have exhausted themselves, the *raison d'être* for coming into existence of the body mind apparatus not being there, this structure will disintegrate and no new one take its place. Until a person realizes, he is, so to say, continuously feeding inputs into the system which charge it with certain impulses. These by themselves are enough to let it be active.

In the light of the above are we in a position to give a satisfactory answer to the questions previously raised about the individuation of witness consciousness? Possibly. The body-mind organism is unique and individuated, because of the past samskāras, it keeps on functioning even though the 'I' sense attaches to it no more. The witness calmly watches its show, each witness is as yet a witness of a psychophysical entity with which it had erstwhile a sense of identification. Therefore it remains a someone, a non-doer and yet not pure non-differentiated awareness, but aware of events happening to a composite being. Because of this association, not identification with the body etc. he is witness, and not merged in the Universal, non-differentiated Self; Pure

awareness of nirvikalpa samādhī. This association keeps the world of duality and multiplicity going even though in a vastly mitigated sense. It has been suggested that his perception of duality and the world etc. is as that of a person who experiences an objective illusion but having seen through it, is aware of its being an illusion.

These last remarks also point to the possibility of jīvanmukti in connection with nirvikalpa samādhī. To reach the state of nirvikalpa samādhī is to experience the Ultimate Reality of the world and the Self as the non-differentiated, pure awareness in which there are no subject and object. All is Brahman and Brahman is all. One who 'returns' to the world after such an experience, may 'live' in it, behaving as if the world of multiplicity were real, but in fact, seeing through the illusion of multiplicity and not being taken in by it all. The question why he would return cannot be answered from a lower mere cognitive, speculative level, but having no desires, such a person is a master: his actions cannot be legislated nor can we deny him the freedom to do as he does from pure joy or spontaneity etc. Fullness and completeness do not preclude or restrict: that he cannot stay and play out some role would militate against his total mastery and total Freedom. The difference between a man of self realization a jīvanmukta and an ordinary human being is clear: The one experiences multiplicity, but does not have